

January 11, 2006

To: 450.03 Students

From: Jason Palmeri

Re: Website Proposal Assignment

In this website proposal, you will outline your plans for your final website project. I am imagining that your final website will combine words and images, include multiple pages, and meet some basic technical standards for XHTML, CSS, and accessibility. (I'll give you more detail on the technical stuff later on). If your website is primarily text-based with relatively simple visuals, I would expect that you incorporate at 1,000 words of text. If you choose to incorporate complex images, audio, or video, you can have substantially less text.

The purpose and audience of your project is up to you; I encourage you to tailor the project to suit your individual professional interests. If you want to do something other than a standard website (e.g. a blog, a dynamic data-driven site, a video), you should talk to me in advance of the proposal so I can modify the assignment to better suit the needs of your project. Your proposal will take the form of a memo (formatted much like this document) with some attached visuals (sitemap, design sketch). I imagine that it would be hard to cover all the requested information in fewer than 500 words.

The website proposal is due on Monday 2/6 (posted to your blog any time before the end of the day). Once you start building your website, you will revise the proposal to turn it into a rationale explaining the final product.

Your final proposal will describe your plans for the following aspects of your proposed site:

- Audience, Purpose, and Context
- Content
- Architecture (including site map)
- Design (including rough sketch)

Audience, Purpose, and Context

In this section, you will outline the basic goals and rationale for your proposed project:

- What is the goal of your website? What do you want people to learn, believe, or do after interacting with your website?
- Is your purpose narrow and specific enough that you can adequately achieve it in a small- scale project?
- Who is the audience for your website? (Be specific!)
- How will your website distinguish itself from others that have a similar purpose? (Discuss at least three "competing" sites.)

Content

In this section, you will discuss your site content:

- How will you develop your content with audience and purpose in mind? What elements of your topic will you emphasize and/or minimize?
- What modes will you use for presenting your content (text, images, audio, video)? Why?
- What style and tone will you adopt in your content? (Give example phrases)
- What sources will you use to inform your content? (Describe at least four sources and why you them credible and useful)

Architecture

In this section, you will explain the organization, labeling, and navigation systems you will use for structuring information on your website. (Be specific about the details of each system). You will also create a sitemap which visually demonstrates your site organization. Finally, you will explain how your information architecture is designed to accommodate the likely mental models and preferences of your target users.

Design

In this section, you will describe your plans for the visual look and feel of the website (colors, images, typography, layout). In addition to describing your design concept in words, you should also include some rough visual representation (hand-drawn sketch, PowerPoint slide or Dreamweaver page, banner image created in Photoshop), In addition to this basic description / visual sketch, you should discuss:

- How do your design choices work to appeal to your audience and achieve your purpose?
- What are three designs that inspired you? How are you building upon--but also differentiating from--these designs? (Include links or copies of print documents)
- How does your design plan follow or deviate from Williams' principles of repetition, alignment, proximity and contrast?