Using Imagery in a Website

Creating a pleasurable user experience with high-quality, ethical image selection and placement.
Sourcing Imagery

- Finding just the right images for your website project takes time, skill, and a discerning eye.
- Here are some guidelines to help.
Image Selection Criteria
1. Is it relevant?

Image Selection Criteria
Is it relevant?

- Images should resonate with the personality you are striving to portray with your design.
- Don't select an image that's simply really cool, but irrelevant to your message.
Is it relevant?

- For example, you might like manga drawings, but are they really going to work for a business doing financial assets management?
- Only if that spirit of manga is part of the branding message somehow.
2. Is it interesting?

Image Selection Criteria
Is it interesting?

- On the other hand, tying an image too closely to the content may result in using tired clichés or being too literal.
- Sometimes relevance can take a back seat if you're trying to really capture the attention of your target audience.
Is it interesting?

Here are a couple of sites who use interesting illustrations which are not immediately relevant to what they sell:

- [ThinkGeek](#)
- [Tijuana Flats](#)
3. Is it appealing?

Image Selection Criteria
Is it appealing?

- Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, they say.
- You must understand your target audience so that you can select or create imagery that is aesthetically and emotionally appealing to them.
Is it appealing?

- Appealing images are important for college websites.
- If the college seems dull, old-fashioned, or sloppy, potential students may avoid applying for or interacting with it.
Is it appealing?

- Make sure the image you've chosen:
  - looks high-quality
  - adds to the visual hierarchy and balance of your page layout
Is it appealing?

- Make sure the image you've chosen:
  - looks high-quality
  - adds to the visual hierarchy and balance of your page layout
  - avoids undesirable symbology
Is it appealing?

- The following sites include excellent college photography:
  - Arizona State University
  - James Madison University
Copyright Issues
Copyright Issues

- In the U.S. and much of the world, copyright is conferred on an individual the moment the camera shutter is clicked.
- Never assume that you may have permission to use an image you find online.
- Copyright holders usually retain the rights to their images and all derivative work.
Case Study 1: Monkey

Copyright Issues
Case Study 1: Monkey

- In an interesting case, photographer David Slater left the remote trigger for his camera within reach of a macaque monkey in Indonesia.
- The monkey took a series of “selfies” with the camera.
- Slater has tried to claim copyright to the images.
Case Study 1: Monkey

The U.S. Copyright Office has stated that the works are created by a non-human, and therefore not subject to copyright.
Case Study 2: Hope

Copyright Issues
Case Study 2: Hope

In a case involving *derivative work*, artist Shepard Fairey designed this poster in support of Barack Obama and sold hundreds of copies. Then the image went viral online.
Case Study 2: Hope

The graphic was proved to be a derivative of an Associated Press (AP) photograph by Mannie Garcia. This resulted in Fairey settling out of court for an undisclosed amount.
Image Sources
Make Your Own
Image Sources
Make Your Own

- If you have the skill and inclination, creating photography and/or illustrations for your site can be very appealing.
- It's the best way to be sure that the imagery on your site is completely original and won't be found elsewhere.
- Often, a website requires a great deal of illustration in the form of icons, buttons, backgrounds, drawings, and logos.
Make Your Own

- If a single designer creates these, they can all conform to a specific design motif and color palette.
- The following site uses many illustrations all drawn by the same person:
  - [Sew-It-All](#)
Stock Photography

Image Sources
Stock Photography

- If you lack the time or ability to generate your own images, your next stop will probably be a stock photo archive.
- Image archives consist of photos and illustration that are created for multiple, multi-client use, rather than for a specific project.
It is important that you track down and understand the licensing and image usage guidelines associated with the stock image(s) you select.

High-quality photos of people can run more money because the person photographed must sign a model release and may want to be paid for posing.
Stock Photography: Free Images

- The biggest free archive of images is at stock.xchng.
- The larger the database, the better your chances of finding a good image for your work.
- The average quality of images at free sites can't compare to the overall quality of the images you pay for.
Stock Photography: Free Images

- Even on “free” stock sites, there may be attribution requirements.
- 14 Amazingly Free Stock Photo Websites from *Entrepreneur Magazine*
Stock Photography: Rights-managed Images

- When an image is rights-managed, you are charged according to a number of factors:
  - the size of your business
  - the number of people who will be exposed to the image
  - the amount of time for which the image will be in use
Stock Photography: Rights-managed Images

- Rights-managed images can be quite a bit pricier than royalty-free.
- This level of management means it will be very unlikely that your competitor will be using the same image as you.
- Photos in a rights-managed collection are usually done by professionals.
Stock Photography: Rights-managed Images

Some rights-managed collections:
- Getty Images
- MasterFile
- Corbis Images
Outsourcing

Image Sources
Outsourcing: Photography

- Be sure to find a photographer who has experience with commercial photography and the type of shots you're after.
- A great food photographer may be unfamiliar with the best methods for capturing campus photos.
Outsourcing: Photography

- The best way to find the right photographer is by word of mouth.
- You can also start here: [American Photographic Artists](#)
Outsourcing: Photography

- Get everything in writing before a shoot:
  - the details of each shot needed
  - where and when you'd like the photos taken
  - pricing
  - model releases
Outsourcing: Illustration

- Professional illustration can truly enhance the personality of a website.
- Think about all the Google Doodles we see on a regular basis.
- Also check out:
  
  40 Excellent Illustrations in Web Designs
Outsourcing: Illustration

- Make sure that the illustrations you combine on a site match well in color and style.
- If you need to hire a professional illustrator, you can start here: [Hire an Illustrator](#)
Outsourcing: Illustration

I can illustrate for your site too. 😊
Bad Habits to Avoid
“Google Ganking”

Bad Habits to Avoid
If you find an image at Google, it's best to assume it is copyright-protected.

You are not allowed to simply download it and maybe crop and edit it a bit, then use it on your own design.

This practice is known as Google Ganking.
“Google Ganking”

- Avoid a cease-and-desist letter, or worse—a lawsuit.
- Even on Flickr, be sure to understand the licensing for a given image before using it.
- All Flickr images at the very least require attribution (text crediting the photographer).
Hotlinking
Bad Habits to Avoid
Hotlinking

- Even worse than Google Ganking is *hotlinking* directly to the image on its original server.
- This steals bandwidth from the owner's own web servers, adding insult to injury.
Hotlinking

- Usually, images placed in an HTML page are sourced from somewhere within the same site, such as this:
  <img src="images/chipmunk.jpg">
- Hotlinking looks like this:
  <img src="http://somebodyelsessite.com/images/chipmunk.jpg">
Hotlinking
Clip Art
Bad Habits to Avoid
Clip Art

- Many websites offer free or cheap clipart and illustration packages.
- They are generally too goofy, overused, and unprofessional for a serious design project.
- Leave them for the internal company newsletters. (Wait—don’t use them there either.)
Clip Art

- Using clip art on a website is like serving instant mashed potatoes at a five-star restaurant.
- Your imagery should be original, appropriate, and astonishing.
WordPress Media Library
A few how-tos.
Overview of the Media Library
Inserting from the Edit Page Screen

The Spring 2016 semester begins January 23, 2016–our 100th year serving the Sacramento Area.
Inserting from the Edit Page Screen
Alt Attribute for Accessibility

ATTACHMENT DETAILS

moment_of_silence.jpg
October 8, 2015
87 kB
1440 × 1170
Edit Image
Delete Permanently

URL: http://www.scc.losrios.edu/w

Title: moment_of_silence

Caption

Alt Text: photo of people holding flag

Description
Editing Display Settings

- Alignment
- Link
- Sizing
Featured Image

- Posts and events only.
Replacing and Editing Images

WordPress Media Library

Edit Image

- Alt Text: photograph of Belle Cooledge
- Description
- Att. Categories
- Att. Tags
- Replace media: Upload a new file

To replace the current file, click the link and upload a replacement.

Decorative: All images must either have an alt attribute or be declared as decorative.
Using Imagery in Web Design
Using Imagery in Web Design

- Regardless of how good a job you've done selecting images for your design, there's another critical factor to consider: **presentation**.
- When you're formatting images for use on your site, their presentation will often depend on the constraints of the layout you've chosen.
Using Imagery in Web Design

- And remember to consider how the image will appear on mobile devices.
- It's up to you to determine:
  - how an image will be cropped and color corrected
  - if an image will have any framing or borders
  - what type of visual effects will be applied to the image, if any
Using Imagery in Web Design

- Begin with the highest-resolution image you can obtain, before making edits in Photoshop.
- Get comfortable with Photoshop, so that you can make the images that appear on your website as stunning as possible.
- You can get a good start at [https://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/tutorials.html](https://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/tutorials.html)
Image Editing
Creative Cropping

Image Editing
Creative Cropping

- Some of the most profound impacts you can make on the presentation of an image come from wisely choosing what should be included, and what should not.
- *Cropping* is a fundamental image manipulation technique.
- Cropping can eliminate unnecessary or distracting details.
Creative Cropping

- The original photo with perspective issues and extraneous details.
Creative Cropping

- I copied the image to a new layer in Photoshop.
- I pulled out a few guides and used Edit > Transform > Distort to straighten out the lines of the house.
Creative Cropping

- I had lost the top of the house, so I increased the height of the canvas (Image > Canvas Size...)
- I used the Transform command again to readjust the perspective and make the house taller.
Creative Cropping

- Finally, I cropped out extraneous details on the left and right.
Creative Cropping

- The original photo compared to the corrected, cropped photo. The second photo gives a much better.
Creative Cropping

- Cropping is also useful in increasing the emotional impact or enhancing the message of an image.
Lighting and Color

Image Editing
Lighting and Color

- If you're not a professional photographer with gads of expensive equipment, it can be a challenge to obtain photos with just the right color and lighting balance.
- Do your best to consider composition and lighting before you take your shot.
Lighting and Color

- Then enhance the lighting and color in Photoshop.
- Just about any photo straight out of the camera is going to need some corrections. Some need more than others.
Lighting and Color

- A typical angled selfie.
- I rotated it to a more pleasing angle, cropped in to put the focus on her face, and improved the lighting and color.
- I used the Blur tool to soften the noise caused by low light levels.
Lighting and Color

- Here I did some lighting and color-correction, and then cropped in order to show my son's expression better.
File Formats
Once you have your Photoshop file completed, you'll need to save your image for the web. It's important to understand the characteristics of the three main image file formats used on the web.
GIF
File Formats
GIF

- GIF is an 8-bit format that supports a maximum of 256 individual colors for a given file.
- GIF is therefore bad for photographs.
- It is instead ideal for graphics composed of areas of solid color.
GIF

- GIFs can display transparency, but it's all or nothing: 100% transparent or 100% a specific color.
- GIF can also support animations.
JPEG
File Formats
JPEG

- JPEG was designed specifically for photographic images.
- Unlike GIF or PNG, JPEG can provide fairly small file sizes at 24-bit color (16.8 million colors.)
The drawback is that JPEG is a lossy format that creates visual artifacts. Quality depends on how much you compress the file, or how many times it is repeatedly saved as a JPEG.
PNG
File Formats
PNG

- PNG comes in two flavors: 8-bit and 24-bit.
- The 8-bit PNG works much like GIF.
- 24-bit PNGs can display as many colors as JPEGs but without the lossy compression.
- PNG can result in much higher file sizes since it does not have lossy compression.
PNG

- For this reason, you get much higher quality, and at times a much higher file size that can go with it.
PNG

- PNG-24 can also support variable transparency, which means that any given pixel can be partly transparent.
Thank you.

Have fun adding images to your sites!