

Designing for Uncertainty

Rethink Your Design Thinking for a Million-Device World



About Me

- + Jason Pamental
principal, co-founder of h+w design
- + Have realized I can't work where I can't contribute
- + Can be found @jpamental in most places
- + Post thoughts, work, instigations & pics
from Instagr.am @ hwdesignco.com
- + Fixed widths and Arial make me sad



Why Are We Here?

- + *My job is to challenge you & what you know about web design*
- + Your job is to **make me**
- + *My challenge is to inspire you to do more*
- + Your task is to **listen, think & create**
- + **Rinse & repeat**

What's Our Agenda?

- + To learn we know **nothing**
- + To build a new understanding of **design**
- + Take our Yesterday & **tear it apart**
- + Use this new normal to **build our Tomorrow**

Few Things Are Certain

- + We'll all die eventually
- + Usually after paying a lot of taxes
- + We have no idea how someone is going to view our design – **none**
- + **Really. Think about that last one**

Even Less Is Certain About Users

- + Impossible to know how your design will be consumed
- + On what size screen with what kind of input
- + Or what else they might be doing at the time
- + Desktop/Laptop/Tablet/eReader/Phone/Console/TV/Car

**so frankly, we can't be
certain of all that much**

One Thing IS Certain

- + Increasingly, first point of contact is from a mobile device
- + That skyrockets in time of crisis
- + People need information on the device at hand – namely, the one IN their hand
- + Sites serving resources appropriately will:
 - get critical information out faster
 - not crash

We're Talking about Boston

- + News sites crashed
- + Government sites failed
- + Twitter stayed up (for better or worse)
- + BostonGlobe.com was one of the few sites that remained largely intact and delivering up-to-date, critical information
- + Thanks Ethan Marcotte, Filament Group & Upstatement

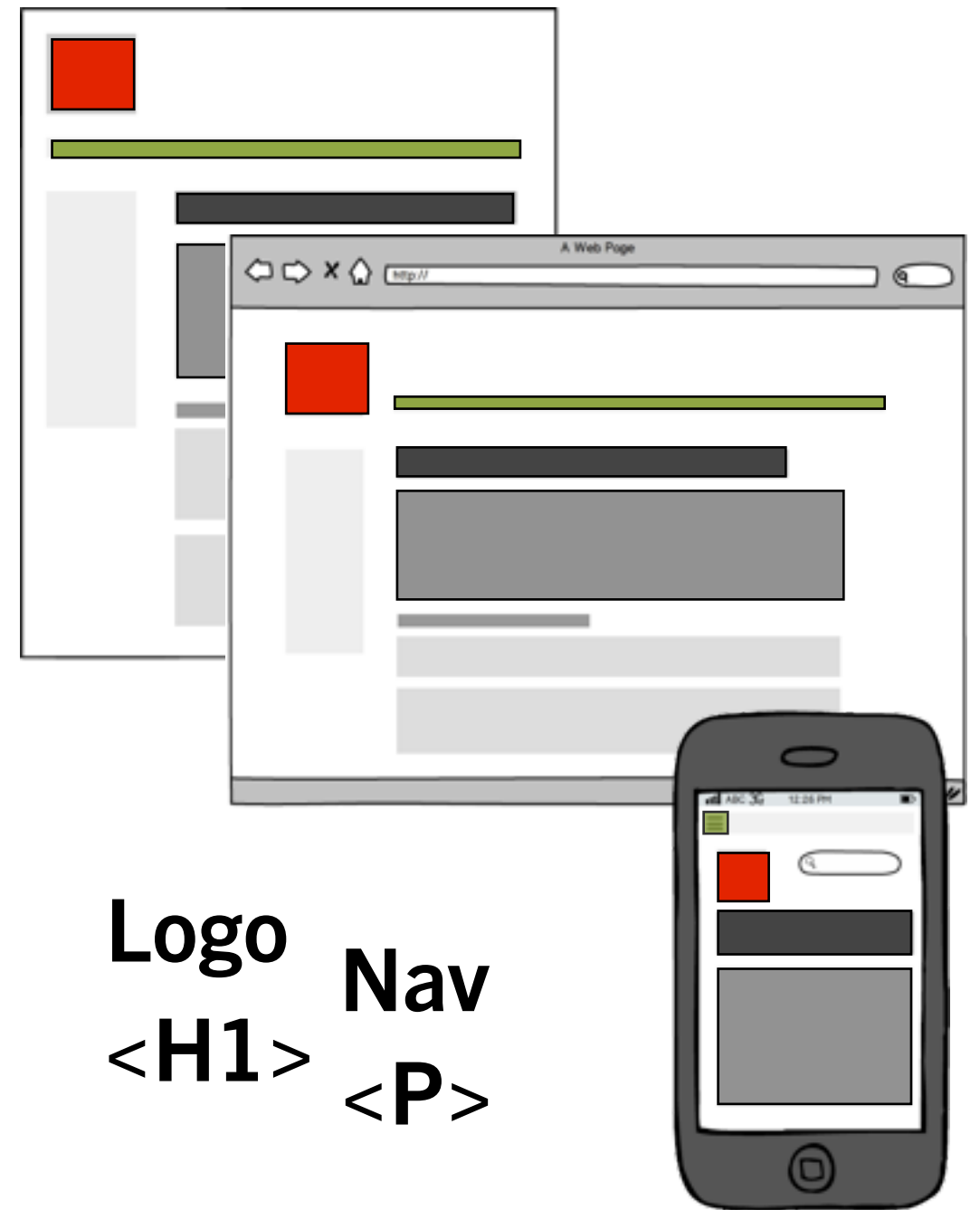
It's Time To Rethink Our Design Thinking

We're Not Designing Pages

- + We're designing **systems** of **relationships** & **hierarchy** to infer **meaning** & **importance**
- + Good **design** has **structure** — but that structure **must be fluid**
- ✦ **960 pixels is a copout.** Our work will be viewed on phones, tablets, tv's more than on computers

We're Designing Meaning

- + Information & understanding **must hold true** no matter how it's conveyed
- + How users **understand & learn** is as **crucial** as how they see
- + Start with **semantics** & adapt your **presentation**



Psychology & Cognitive Science are The New Black

- + In order to **preserve meaning & reinforce understanding**, you must know how **learning works**
- + Once you know how **learning works**, you can tailor your **system of design**
- + That system of **visual & information hierarchy** can then survive across **platforms & screen sizes**

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+ A place for **everything** & **everything** in its **place**



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Task-Appropriate Design is the OTHER New Black

- + A **place** for **everything** & **everything** in its **place**
- + But the **place** might be **different** on a **phone**... or in a **car**
- + As may be the **importance** of some **tasks** versus others



For Example

- + Restaurant site on a phone: **What I can eat & how do I get there?**



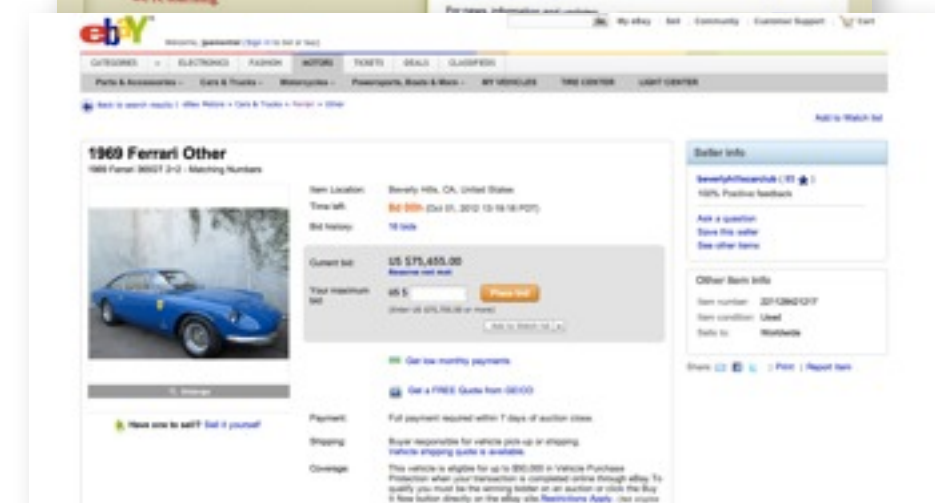
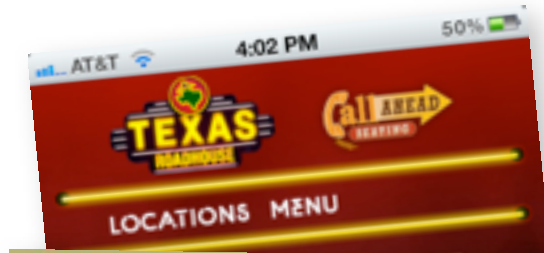
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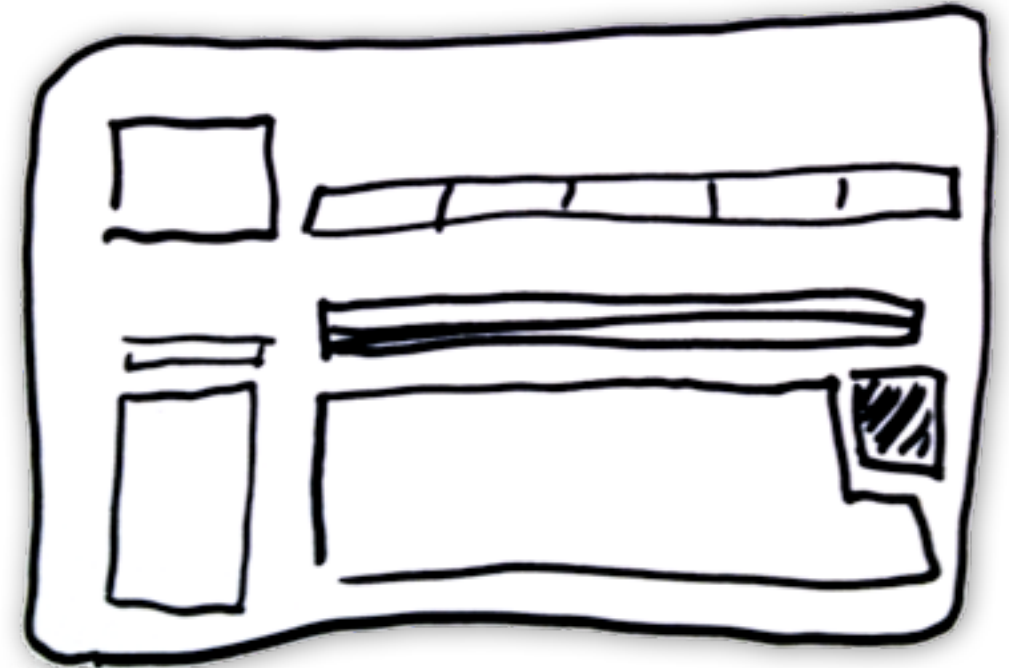
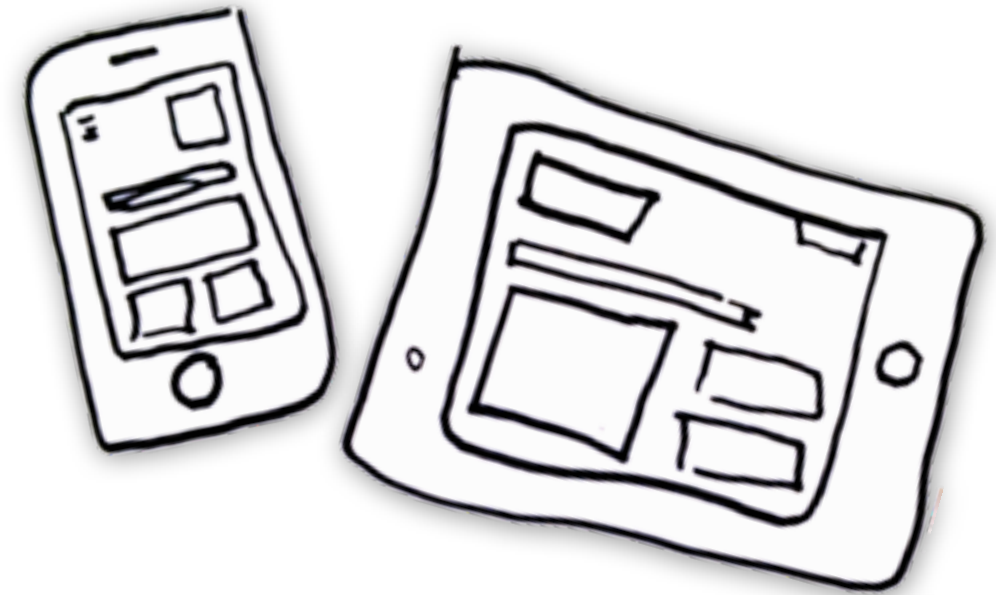
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- + Contexts may coincide with one case or the other — but should never exclude the other behavior



Embrace the New World Order

Design by Sharpie

- + Sketch out your design with a marker to sort out hierarchy
- + Try 3 or 4 sizes & adjust relative scale
- + Don't forget about BIG (#RWD isn't just for smartphones)
- + Now interaction: what's natural to the device & method of use



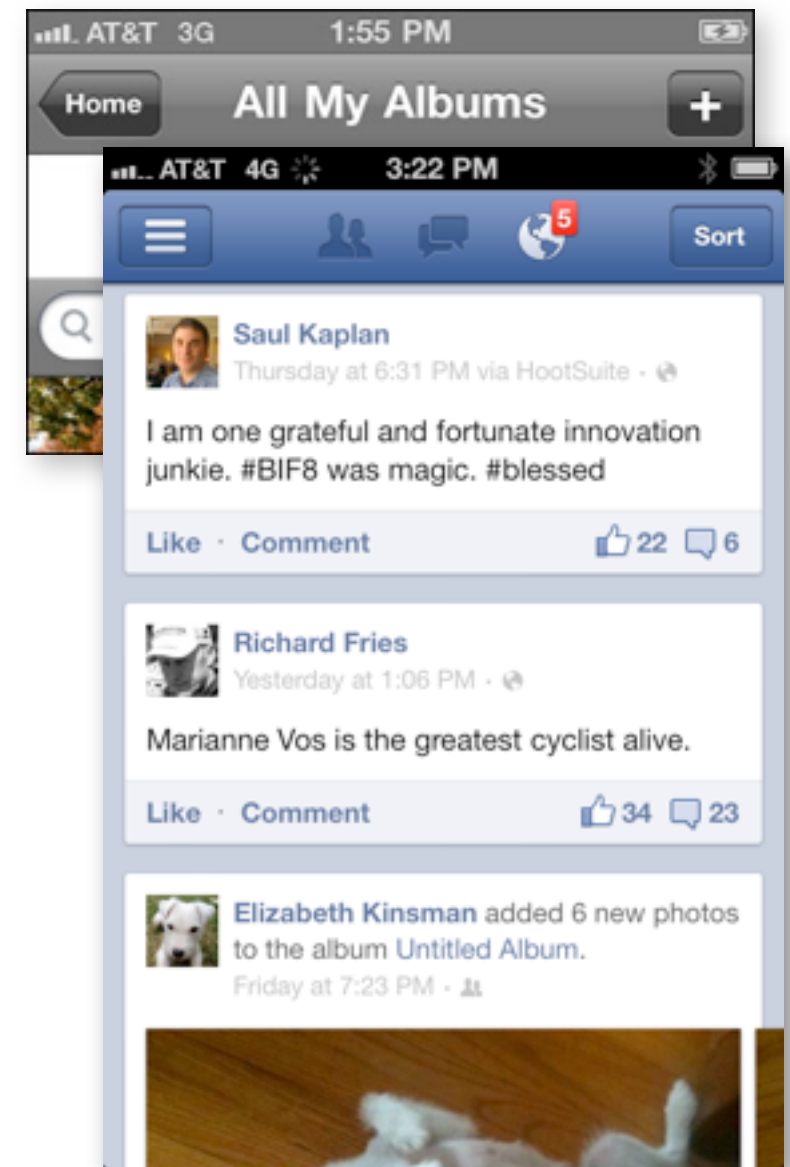
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- + UI patterns evolving, but conventions are emerging



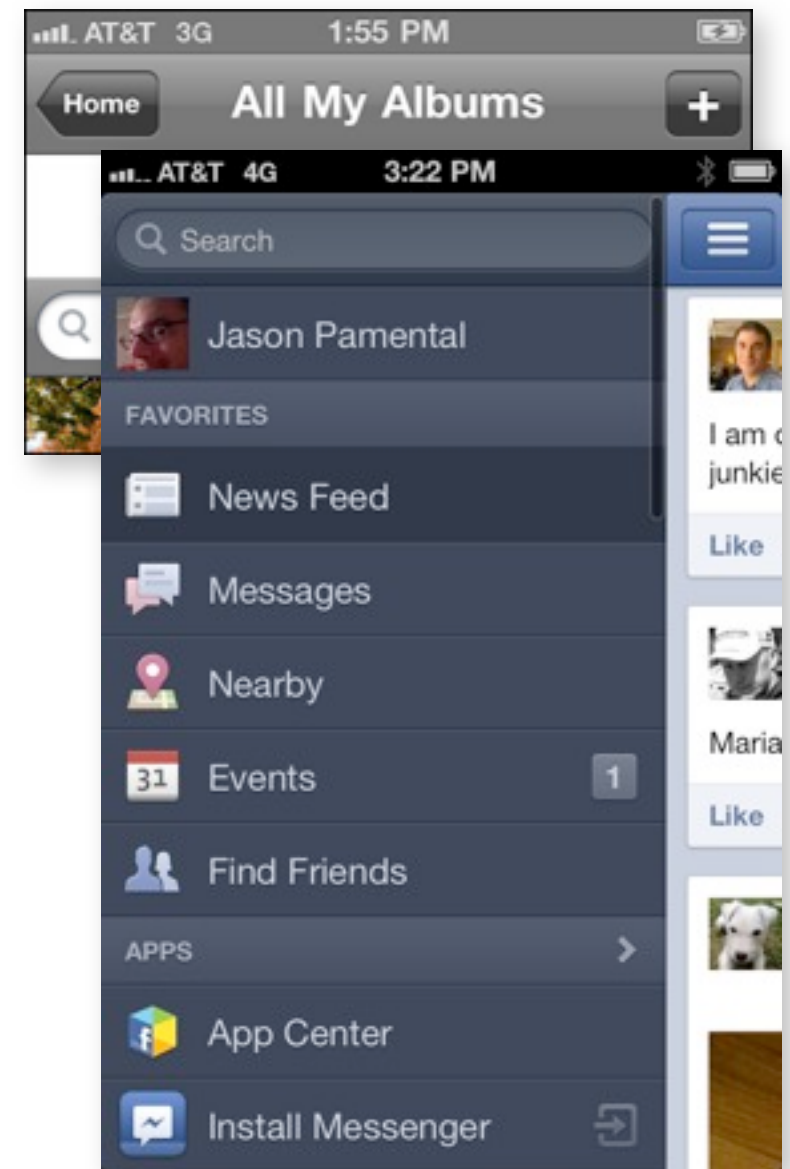
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- + Responsive Design is new
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- + Native Apps work: think about why. Decode your favorites
- + Some App UI patterns can be used on the web



It's not the What but the Why & How

- + Josh Clark: '**I have some attention to spend**' — but how are they spending it?
- + @LukeW: with **one eye & one thumb**
- + There is **no mobile user** — there are only **mobile devices**
- + Tasks vary by circumstances of use (the **Why**)
- + **How** users **accomplish** those **tasks** varies by **device capability** (hover, touch, swipe)

Users Are Looking For It

- + The **web** is **growing up** (slowly & quickly)
- + Users don't just want to access — they want to ***experience***
- + Tools like **Drupal & WordPress** means the next amazing site is one smart student intern away.
There's no excuse for doing it badly
So what will make your site memorable?

Our Process is Begging For It

- + The **Decline & Fall** of the Photoshop Empire
- + **Tiles** not Comps
- + **Prototype**, not promises
- + **Never**, *ever* use Arial again

*So **why** do we still **think** in **pages**?*

The Web Has Left the Building

- + It's in our **pocket**
- + It's on the **couch**
- + It's on our **television**
- + It's in the **dash**

*So **why** do we still think **960** matters?*

Power to the People

- + and their **Web clients**
- + Since we don't know what that client is, **the solution has to live there, not on the server** (for now)
- + A **CMS** can help us **deliver**
- + **Doing** so from scratch **can be hard**

So don't do that.

- + **Use conventions** to build appropriately
- + **Use a CMS** to deliver **one platform** with **many experiences**
- + **Nothing** we've discussed is **impossible** (or in many cases even difficult)
- + It just takes... **Thought**

**Makes the ‘thinking’ part
sound pretty important, huh?**

Why Harp on This?

- + Because designing **a page** in Photoshop **is simply fantasy**
- + Worse: designing just a page is **only 1/400th of the answer** (or less)
- + Even prototyping in **static HTML** only tells **part of the story** (though doing so responsively is a start)

Be Prepared

- + You know **design**
- + You know your **content** (or you should)
- + You know the **web** & what can be done on it
- + Don't stop **looking, seeing & learning**
- + Use **a CMS** to help
- + Design **meaning** not pages

and now, please...

Get Out & Go Make Something Awesome

Get Out & Go Make Something Awesome



Thank You!

Jason Pamental (@jpamental)
jason@hwdesignco.com

Resources

- + Mobile UI Patterns:

<http://mobile-patterns.com/dashboard-navigation>

- + LukeW's Multi-Device Layout Patterns

<http://www.lukew.com/ff/entry.asp?1514>

- + Navicon (blog post)

Jeremy Keith (excellent post w/lots of references)

- + StyleTil.es (website)

Samantha Warren (this is your start, then go Google)

Books

- + Responsive Web Design

Ethan Marcotte, A Book Apart

- + Adaptive Web Design

Aaron Gustafson, Easy Readers

- + Mobile First

Luke Wroblewski, A Book Apart

- + Don't Make Me Think

Steve Krug (really - you still have to read it)

- + The Design of Everyday Things

Don Norman (web usability learned from the design of doors)