

YSU Web Team

CSIS 4843 Advanced Internship – Summer 2008

Adam Kalcic

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Acknowledgements

First I would like to thank my supervisor, Bob Tupaj, for giving me the opportunity to work with the YSU Web Team as a student Web designer. It is a rare opportunity that a student gets to receive a “real world” work experience at the same University that they’re attending. I feel that the knowledge I have gained by working with Bob and the other members of the staff will benefit me greatly as I head into the professional world. It has made me really enjoy what I do and realize that this is what I want to do as a career.

Introduction

During winter break in December 2007 I applied for a position with the Youngstown State University Web Team for a student Web designer. I figured this would be a perfect way to gain a significant amount of work experience prior to graduation. I opted to use my existing employment as an internship for the summer 2008 semester instead of the spring semester because of already having a significant amount of class work. I figured this would give me time to work more hours and gain as much experience as possible.

I interned last summer as well with the Big Reach Center of Hope in Greenford, Ohio as a public relations intern. In addition to redesigning their Web site, I also designed newsletters, brochures, and other paper documents for them. Since I’m a Web Communications major, that internship was important because of the professional writing aspects, which is also something I really like. I’ve also been doing small sites for the past couple years now as a freelance designer.

By working with the YSU Web Team, I've gotten to work on numerous smaller and larger projects that pertain to Web design and development. It has increased my knowledge greatly, giving me a deep appreciation for what a Web design service/team has to go through on a daily basis. The amount of work that I've done will help in the long term to develop my skills as a designer and developer, hopefully giving me an advantage as I head into the workplace.

Company Description

The Youngstown State Web Team is an extension of the Office of Marketing and Communications at the University—which is housed in the University Development Office in Tod Hall. The Web Team is small group that maintains the main YSU site (www.ysu.edu), as well as the sites of most of the departments, offices, and organizations on campus. Bob Tupaj is the University Web Site Manager, and is the supervisor of the rest of the staff. Bob handles requests for Web sites, develops daily agendas, and oversees that each of the sites we maintain are operational and any current projects that are being worked on. Other staff members beside myself include Ross Morrone, full-time University Web Designer—Jim Robinson, student Web Programmer—and Zalkia Swope, student Web Designer.

The University Web Team is ever-evolving to maintain current Web standards throughout the industry to keep its sites fresh and current—this includes using CSS layouts instead of tables and incorporating Web 2.0 techniques to our pages. With an industry that changes year by year, the need to stay up to date with current techniques is a must. Even though the Web Team is a small staff, we carry a heavy workload on a daily basis to keep things current and up to date.

Organizational Chart

Bob Tupaj (University Web Site Manager)		
Ross Morrone (University Web Designer and Developer)		
Jim Robinson (Student Web Programmer)	Zalkia Swope (Student Web Designer)	Adam Kalcic (Student Web Designer)

Position Description

Since I began working with the YSU Web Team in January I've gotten to work on many different projects—dealing with many aspects of the Web industry. On a daily basis I update pages, create flash animations, edit photos/graphics, and help in the development process of the campus sites. As an intern, I've gotten to work more hours, giving me the chance to participate in even more projects that come to us. I've also been able to expand my knowledge using various programs that pertain to the Web industry such as Adobe Dreamweaver, Photoshop, and Flash—in addition to learning to techniques that I might not of learned before. Getting to use this software on a daily basis is a great asset because other than school, I hadn't really used them much outside of the classroom.

I've also been able to learn a lot from the Ross Morrone, the University's Web Designer—in terms of technique, styles, and preferences. Getting to see how other people approach things is truly an integral part of a new employee's learning experience, and it helps to have someone very knowledgeable and passionate about what they do around to help. Thanks to my education though and prior knowledge it has been a smooth transition

into the position, and I know that it has already helped me become a better Web and graphic designer.

Internship Experiences

As an intern and employee with the YSU Web Team I feel that I've had the opportunity to get many different experiences pertaining to Web design and graphic design. I've worked on a few sites that were either built from scratch or needed redesigned, and I worked on a variety of graphic editing for several sites—including the YSU site. Three sites that I worked on from scratch included: YSU Academic Advising, YSU CLASS Advising, and YSU Parking Services. The two advising sites required completely brand new sites with the addition of all of their content that they provided me with. I then created a template for the site, and then added in the content required. For the Parking Services site I just had to redesign the current site, which was pretty outdated looking; the content was just copied over from the old site. Getting to work on these sites has given me the opportunity to practice working on designs using just CSS, and it has also let me get involved with the development process of a Web site and working with a client.

The other project I worked on quite a bit over the summer was updating the Summer Festival of the Arts Web site. Since January I've been making updates to the site—both in terms of graphics and adding/deleting content. I've also worked on editing the flash slideshows of the YSU Web Site—adding new photos throughout the site. Overall I feel that the experience that I have received as an employee with the YSU Web Team has helped make me a better Web designer and developer and has further shown that this is what I want to do as a career.

HW, SW, Interpersonal

During my employment with the Web Team I've had the opportunity to work on both Windows and Mac platforms—even though I prefer using a Mac now. I mainly used Photoshop, Dreamweaver, and Flash over the course of my employment. I also had the opportunity to use Fireworks and Illustrator, two programs that I didn't have a lot of experience with before, but still two important programs for a Web designer to have experience with.

I have also been able to meet and interact with a lot of people because of this internship. Besides my co-workers, I had to stay in constant communication with the clients that put in requests with the Web Team. Having a good interpersonal contact and connection with those around you is an integral part of a Web designer's job, and I feel that I've been able to meet a lot of great people throughout this process.

Problems and Opportunities

As a Web designer you are constantly learning new things and ways to go about accomplishing something, and of course you will run into problems. The biggest learning curve I had was learning how to design just by using CSS and not tables. It was frustrating at first, but as a result of getting to do it just about everyday, it has become second nature as I design Web sites—and it makes things much easier than using tables. As part of the team, we all help each other in terms of working on projects and helping others with problems that are encountered throughout the workday. It was good to know that I was working in a friendly, laid-back environment—which made it easy to want to go to work everyday.

YSU/CIS Background

I'm currently a senior at Youngstown State University, and I'll be graduating at the end of the fall semester with a degree in Web Communications—an individual curriculum combining Web design and professional writing. I began my college years as a Computer Information Systems major during first year of school, but after finding out about the Web Communications program, I knew that was what I really wanted to do. The program has given me the opportunity to take a variety of computer related classes, as well as many professional writing classes. I feel that the Web Communications program, coupled with my two internship experiences, has greatly prepared me for the professional world.

Strengths and Weaknesses

I feel that I have developed a lot of strengths over the years when it comes to being a Web designer. I feel I have the expertise necessary to code (X)HTML and CSS without using a program like Dreamweaver to be a “crutch”. I also feel that I'm proficient in using Photoshop and Flash to develop graphics that make Web pages more appealing to the eye, but still adhering with Web standards and file size.

I still feel that one weakness I have is the programming side of Web design. Even though I've taken classes in ASP.NET, PHP, and have some experience using JavaScript—I still feel that I would need to gain further experience using these programming languages. However, since I'm more design oriented, I still feel that I have enough knowledge at this point to succeed in the Web design industry.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude this report by once again thanking Bob Tupaj and the rest of the Web Team for graciously welcoming me to the group—giving me the opportunity

to expand my knowledge of Web design. This experience has had a profound impact on me, making realize that this is what I really want to do for living. It is rare that you can find an internship in which you get real job experience at the same school you are currently attending—rather than going to an outside company.

During my internship I've discovered what a Web-based organization truly is, and how it is operated on a daily basis. Whether it was creating a new Web site, uploading images, or just scanning something, I feel that I really got a lot out of my internship with the YSU Web Team. As my internship comes to a close, I will remain on staff until I graduated in December. I will also be pursuing the opportunity to stay on a full-time basis, but if that doesn't work out, I will be looking at the surrounding areas for full-time employment. I will hopefully look back fondly on this experience years later as one of the building blocks to my career as a Web designer and IT professional.

Future Learning

Like any computer-based field, a Web designer must always be evolving his/her skills with new technologies and techniques of how to do things. With new techniques like CSS layouts and new forms of media, the Web industry is continuing to evolve into more of an interactive environment. I would like to get a Masters Degree eventually in Web Media or Web Design, but I think it is important once I graduate to get a full-time job—continuing to get professional experience.

Recommendations

I feel that getting as much as experience as possible is to key to a successful career in any field, but it is especially necessary for a web designer or IT professional. Even after doing two internships and completing all of my class work, I still feel that I

need to learn more to further my skills. I would definitely recommend any student to do an internship if he/she has the opportunity, or possibly some type of freelance work, because the benefits of getting “on the job” experience and practice can’t be replicated in the classroom.

Appendix A - Resume

Adam Kalcic

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Objective

Seeking a position as a Web designer or in a related Web communications field.

Education

Bachelor of Science in Applied Science (December 2008) Major: Web Communications
Youngstown State University, Youngstown, OH GPA: 3.3

Relevant Work Experience

Student Web Designer (January 2008-Current)

Youngstown State University, Youngstown, OH

- Create and update University and departmental Web sites

Office Assistant (March 2006-Current)

Burger Travel Service, Youngstown, OH

- Designed and maintain Web site
- Assist with general office tasks

Summer Intern (May 2007-August 2007)

Big Reach Center of Hope, Greenford, OH

- Redesigned and updated existing Web site, designed a newsletter and brochure
- Assisted director in preparing and writing news releases and other print documents

Computer and Technical Skills

Software Used: Extensive use of Adobe Creative Suite: Dreamweaver, Photoshop, Flash, Director, InDesign, and Illustrator – in addition to the Microsoft Office Suite.

Languages Used: Extensive use of (X)HTML, CSS

Other Languages and Programs Used: JavaScript, PHP, C++, Visual Basic, MySQL

Operating Systems Used: Windows and Mac

Honors

- Deans List (Spring 2006, Fall 2006, Spring 2007, Fall 2007, Spring 2008)

References Available Upon Request

Appendix B – Work Schedule

Week	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Total Hrs. Per Week
1	8	8	4			20
2		8		7		15
3	6	7	6	6		25
4	6	7	6	6		25
5	6	7	6	6		25
6	8	8	8	8		32
7	8	8	8	8	8	40
8	8	8	8	8	8	40
9	8	8	8	8	8	40
10	8	8	8	8	8	40
11	8	8	8	8	8	40
12	8	8	8	8	8	40
TOTAL HOURS						382