

# Portfolio & Professional Websites

A workshop for producers and instructors by DesignLab @ UW-Madison

Professional websites and online portfolios are the world's window to your research and talents. First impressions are important so make sure you have a clear understanding of your audience, your goals, and the effect your style choices can have on them.

## Best Practices for Websites

- avoid clutter
- make navigation easy and clear for user
- design elements should complement (not distract from) content
- make deliberate design choices using CRAP (Contrast, Repetition, Alignment, Proximity)

## Steps for Building a Professional Website:

1. Who's your audience?
2. What are your goals?
3. What content will help you achieve those goals and reach your audience?
4. How do you want to structure that information?
5. What do you want your website to look like?
6. Choose the tools you want to use
7. Build it and make it happen.

## Resources for Websites

- **Software Training for Students (STS)** offers free classes for students, will schedule customized workshops for whatever class/software you're teaching, and offer individual tech consultations: [doit.wisc.edu/training/student/](http://doit.wisc.edu/training/student/)
- **The Digital Media Center (DMC)** has computer classrooms to reserve for your class, provides high-end equipment for faculty and grad-students to check out, and advises faculty/grad students on media projects: [dmc.wisc.edu](http://dmc.wisc.edu)
- **Infolabs** on campus have equipment (laptops, audio/video recorders, iPods, cameras) for students and instructors to check out: [ecs.library.wisc.edu](http://ecs.library.wisc.edu)
- DoIT provides access to **Lynda.com**, a vast library of excellent software training videos. You can see these videos at [doit.wisc.edu/training/lynda.aspx](http://doit.wisc.edu/training/lynda.aspx)

DesignLab supports students' media design skills and enhances the conceptual and aesthetic dimensions of projects for their classes, extra-curricular activities, and professional development. We conduct 1-on-1 consultations with students and instructors.

## How to Crit a Website

### Conceptually

- What information is the author trying to present/highlight?
- Who is the main audience?
- Does the site accomplish those goals?

### Aesthetically

- Does the information architecture need rearranging?
- Do the site design and elements complement the content?

### Technically

- Does it need some fine tuning or special doodads?

## Of Color & Design

- **Contrast is important.** We read black text on a white background better than the other way around. Avoid placing text on middle grays or other colors that reduce legibility.
- Sometimes the best template is no template at all. Choosing your own simple background and font colors can set your site apart.
- **Use some variety** of size and color of fonts and images to add emphasis and establish a clear hierarchy. [www.typeconnection.com](http://www.typeconnection.com), [wordmark.it](http://wordmark.it)
- Whatever you choose, make sure that it is **continuous and consistent**. Use a few colors, one or two fonts, a background, and make it work throughout the website.
- **Kuler, Color Scheme Designer**, and similar color pickers are a great way to find color schemes to help you: [kuler.adobe.com](http://kuler.adobe.com), [colorschemedesigner.com](http://colorschemedesigner.com)