news

A NEWSLETTER

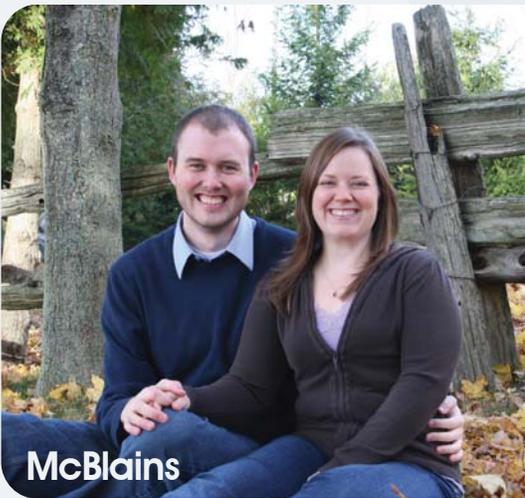"**Hey! I never asked for this!** Well it's about time he writes!"

Introducing the first issue of the (likely sporadic) **Debut Creative** Newsletter. News and facts from the world wide web. Trends, Tips and Cake for everyone!

McBlains

keeping in touch

{ It's official, 2009 has been the busiest two months of my career. It has also been a time of learning like never before; which is why I have decided to create a periodic newsletter. It's a great way for us to keep in touch, while sharing some of the stuff I've learned that can help with your website or services. As always, I'd love to hear what's keeping you busy too.

Here's to growth.

ARE YOU USING...

Gmail

It has long been hailed the best email client in the world, so what makes this the second most popular Google product? In addition to the snappiest inbox on the web, Gmail boasts many "labs" features that are unbelievably useful like Multiple Inboxes, chat, tasks manager and more. It has every feature you would expect from desktop software, but with the convenience of web accessibility. Add to this quick access to tools like Google Docs and Cal and you have a must-see app. I send and receive personal and work emails through my Gmail. I love it.

» see: gmail.com

Twitter

What are you doing? This question is the foundation upon which social media sensation Twitter was made upon. This site allows users to 'tweet' in 140 characters what they're up to, while following friends tweets (it's hard to convey how cool and addicting this actually is). This service is growing in popularity every day. I have been using it to follow some of the world renowned rock-stars of the web design world and have gained invaluable insight into how these giants work. Don't over-think it, sign up, start following and tweeting. RT @ArleyM FTW!

» see: twitter.com

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THANK YOU
My Clients are so cute.

I could just eat you all up.

DEBUT SITE

I'm entering my third year with Debut Creative, and the website is little more than a business card.

Yes, as a web designer and developer it is incredibly ironic that I don't have a proper site. I have rationalized it in several ways:

- » I'm too busy with paying work
- » I'm busy without promotion
- » I love irony

Similarly, my long time buddy, and friendly rival Tim Lum has an equally un-website for his studio.

By way of friendly competition we have decided to take part in this years CSS Reboot. Essentially we are going to completely overhaul our sites and launch on May 1st 2009. After one year we are going to compare site traffic Before and After; whichever studio site comes out on top in terms of popularity, wins! The losing studio will then donate time to the charity of the winners choice. We'll have more details a little closer to the date.

This is a friendly and competitive way for Tim and I to pit our SEO and marketing wits against one another while hopefully finishing the sites that we may otherwise never make the time for.

stay in touch!

put to the test
End Users Site Testing

All too often our sites don't perform the way we or our clients might like. The issue is the end-user: that demographic that is never as predictable as we might like - or are they?

Even those of us who design, develop and maintain sites every day can often be completely flummoxed by how the sites we make are used. Even great tools we use like Analytics fail to tell us.

Website testing is a step we often skip. For one thing tight budgets and time lines require us to cut corners to deliver a product as quickly as possible. While site tests are very time consuming, they can identify some major issues the target audience may have at an early stage of development.

On several occasions I've performed the most basic website test: the wife review. Without fail I am amazed how Kristi interacts with a site for the first time. The balance between competing elements is always exposed - proving that even though it makes sense to a designer or developer, users may get off track.

There are many different ways to test a site (see the article linked below), and it's never too late. In this economy it's no time to scrap a site, but with some slight modifications a website can seem completely different and more usable to the end user.

» A great .net magazine article on website testing (Nov 2008):
http://tinyurl.com/cgrr28

+ MORE RADICAL READING

» @cameronmoll - Good Designers Redesign, Great Designers Realign / http://tinyurl.com/8nv7g

» @boagworld - 5 Options when Website Budgets get Slashed / http://tinyurl.com/dlg3fx

Next Issue
(if I still feel like it)

» **Content Management Systems and You**

» **Website Accessibility**

» **A sneak peek at my self-proclaimed project of the year**

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