

The background of the cover is a complex, abstract pattern of thick, wavy lines. The lines are primarily a vibrant blue, with some lines transitioning into a gradient of orange and red. The lines are layered and overlapping, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is reminiscent of a tangled network of wires or a dynamic, flowing liquid.

# **HOT-WIRING**

## **YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS**

**STRATEGIES FOR PRINT AND NEW MEDIA DESIGNERS**

**CURT CLONINGER**

## Hot-Wiring Your Creative Process: Strategies for print and new media designers

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**PROCESS IS MORE IMPORTANT  
THAN OUTCOME. WHEN THE  
OUTCOME DRIVES THE PROCESS  
WE WILL ONLY EVER GO TO  
WHERE WE'VE ALREADY BEEN.  
IF PROCESS DRIVES OUTCOME  
WE MAY NOT KNOW WHERE  
WE'RE GOING, BUT WE WILL  
KNOW WE WANT TO BE THERE.**

—BRUCE MAU, "AN INCOMPLETE MANIFESTO FOR GROWTH"

# 1

All designers follow some sort of creative process, whether they know it or not. It's like church. Every church from high Catholic to nondenominational charismatic has some sort of liturgy—a form and order that it follows, strictly or loosely, every service. Likewise, every designer, even the most spontaneous and unintentional designer, has a creative process.

Your creative process may look something like this:

1. Get the gig.
2. Stuff creative brief in bottom drawer.
3. Avoid client's phone calls.
4. Drink 'n' think.
5. Stay up all night before the deadline, designing and developing the deliverables.

That's still a creative process—just not a very good one.

As long as you're going to have a creative process, you might as well be intentional about it. There are hundreds of books and articles on the creative process (some of which are listed in this book's bibliography). Its proponents break it up into all sorts of different steps and stages, but basically the creative process, particularly as it relates to graphic design, looks something like this:

1. Predesign
2. Design
3. Develop
4. Implement

That's it, and believe it or not, it will get you pretty far.

Designer Bruce Mau's declaration that "process is more important than outcome" may seem fairly extreme. Of course, from a client's perspective, it seems backward. But from a designer's perspective, it makes sense. As a designer, if you only pursue what seems right to you at first, if you jump right into the development phase without first researching the problem, if you never explore alternative design solutions, you will always wind up with a similar outcome. Assuming you're some sort of creative uber-god with Jedi designer instincts, an uncanny intuitive sense of market clairvoyance, and catlike visual communication reflexes, well and good. Otherwise, you'd better work the process. Even if you are a natural-born "elite" designer, you should still work the process because it can take anyone's designs to a broader, richer, more conceptually intriguing level.

## A Brief Guide to the Creative Process

The four phases of the creative process are fairly straightforward and sensible. In this section we'll take a closer look.

### 1. Predesign

Predesign is the language, research, and interpersonal phase. It results in a written creative brief agreed upon by the designer and the client. This is the phase that most design students rush through, if they go through it at all. But it is arguably the most important phase of the whole project. Muddle the predesign phase and your conceptual approach will be skewed—a fundamental flaw that no amount of design-phase Photoshop voodoo will be able to hide.

Skipping the predesign phase and diving straight into the design phase is like taking a hasty, blurry snapshot of a still life and then devoting weeks meticulously painting from that blurry snapshot. Even if you reproduce the snapshot exquisitely, you'll end up with a blurry painting that misses the mark. As Joe Jackson sang, "You can't get what you want till you know what you want." The predesign phase involves figuring out what you want.

It breaks up into four sequential steps.

#### EYEBALL THE BIG PICTURE

Prior to doing any deep research, prior to even signing a contract, you want to get an overview of the nature and scope of the problem, as well as the nature of the client. Try to be as accurate as possible, realizing that at this point there's no way you can understand all the nuances of



Skipping the predesign phase is like taking a blurry snapshot and then spending weeks meticulously painting it.

the whole picture. Requests for proposals (RFPs) and initial client interviews occur during this step. Even if you are doing subcontract work for a large firm that you trust, and that firm is working for a client that it trusts, you still want to try to understand as much as you can about the project before committing to it.

At the heart of every design project is a problem. Cognitive studies expert Edward De Bono concisely defines a problem as “the difference between what we have and what we want.” If there is no problem, then no solution is required, in which case no design work is required. You are free to make art or go to the beach.

**AT THE HEART OF EVERY DESIGN PROJECT IS A PROBLEM. IF THERE IS NO PROBLEM, THEN NO SOLUTION IS REQUIRED, IN WHICH CASE NO DESIGN WORK IS REQUIRED. YOU ARE FREE TO MAKE ART OR GO TO THE BEACH.**

Try to get a handle on the problem from the start. You will refine your understanding throughout the creative process, but the sooner you define the problem, the more thoroughly your final solution will address it. The problem is not your enemy; it is your guide to the solution. As media theorist Marshall McLuhan observed, “The answers are always inside the problem, not outside.”

#### RESEARCH

In the research phase, you research clients, their products or services, their competition, and their target audiences. With well-known clients, some of this research can be done via regular channels such as magazines, books, newspapers, libraries, and the Internet. Even then, all the specific information about your project will come directly from your clients.

Compare your standard research with the information they give you. Perhaps there are discrepancies between what the public thinks about your clients and what they think about themselves. Perhaps this discrepancy is relevant to how you solve their problem. For example, your chicken client may think its mascot, Clucky the Chicken, is beloved by customers. The problem is that Clucky may be too beloved, and nobody wants to eat Clucky.

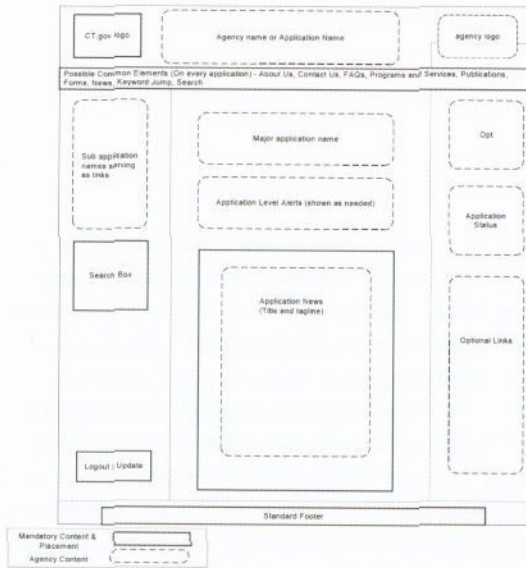
Fast-food restaurant Chick-Fil-A needed a marketing angle when they sought the advice of Dallas-based ad agency The Richards Group. Rather than steer them toward a fowl mascot that would be advertising its own demise, the agency came up with a brilliantly unorthodox conceptual solution: get cows to market

chicken. It makes perfect sense in a “Far Side” kind of way. The cows want to put fast-food burger joints out of business, so they drive consumers to Chick-Fil-A to save their own hides. The campaign has been immensely successful, as well as immensely amusing.

With a lesser-known client, you’ll have to get most of your background information from the client interview. Try to understand the personality of the company and the personality of the product or service. Clients may tell you, “We want to take this exact visual approach,” but they are actually paying you to advise them on what visual approach is best. Understand their larger goals, and not just their proposed solutions.

If your interview questions are thoughtful and probing, if you’re able to get at the heart of the problem, smaller clients may actually learn more about their own companies from your interview. Asking the right questions forces clients to reconsider their companies from consumers’ perspectives through the lens of your particular communications medium—print, Web, video, whatever. This can give a company new insight into its overall mission.

Client interviewing requires verbal communication skills and interpersonal skills; what country folks simply call “social skills.” At this stage in the process, you are acting more like a visual communications consultant. You will fail in this role if you think of yourself only as someone who designs pretty stuff. Your services are valuable to the client even at this stage, before any “designing” has begun.



Design specs vs. Caroline Cloninger: It's better to design with a specific customer in mind than toward a set of impersonal specifications.

## ANALYZE

Take all the research you've gathered and revisit it from various analytical perspectives. What is the crux of the problem? What were the weaknesses of any previous design solutions? Are there other successful design solutions by competitors? How might you incorporate those solutions into your approach? How will the limitations of the medium for which you are designing affect the way in which you solve the problem?

What is the aggregate personality of the primary, secondary, and tertiary audiences? Move from the abstract to the specific: Construct a hypothetical profile person for each audience, including name, occupation, income, age, gender, interests, and other relevant information.

What is the personality of the company? Give the company a name and pretend it's a person. Describe that person. If your client is

Burger King, for example, maybe you decide that Burger King's name is King Edward, but his friends call him Ed. Ed is fun, jovial, and patient with children. Is there anything regal about him at all?

What is the personality of the product or service? Give the product or service a name and pretend it's a person. Describe that person. Perhaps the service that FedEx provides is named Jerry. Is Jerry an athletic college graduate with a crew cut and a courteous yet anal-retentive work ethic? Or is Jerry a slightly graying MIT engineer with a can-do attitude and a pocket-protector full of mechanical pencils? Does Jerry bear any resemblance to an actual FedEx courier? Should he?

If all this seems a bit poetic, it is. The goal is to move from raw statistics toward language that is evocative and descriptive. You are literally trying to put a face on all aspects of the



project by creating a written “image” that will translate readily into graphic design. Don’t discard any project specifications; obviously you’ll need them. But it is easier to design for a face than for a set of specifications.

#### APPROVE A CREATIVE BRIEF

The creative brief is a short written document outlining the problems, goals, strategies, and challenges of the project. Whether the client or the designer generates the creative brief, it should be agreed upon by both. Signing off on a boilerplate, client-generated creative brief that goes against your own research and analysis will probably lead to a mediocre, inadequate design solution. Working from your own creative brief without getting the client to sign off on it will result in miscommunication and probably extra design revisions on your part. The goal is for everybody to be on the same page, and the creative brief is that same page.

Having said that, don’t place an inordinate amount of faith in the creative brief. Language is slippery and highly subjective, particularly when describing the goals of a visual medium like design. If a picture is worth a thousand words, a mock-up is worth ten creative briefs. Breathe easier later, when your clients sign off on one of your design mock-ups, not when they sign off on your amendments to the creative brief. Don’t spend an inordinate amount of time wrangling about the subtle nuances of the brief. It is not the final product; it’s simply a vague but necessary starting point.

Having drafted a creative brief doesn’t automatically ensure its implementation. The

further along you get in the creative process, the easier it is to get engrossed in details and overlook your original research and goals. Once you agree upon the brief, revisit it throughout the creative process, checking your direction against it. This way, your decisions throughout will be informed and directed by your original goals. You may come across new information along the way that causes you to deviate from your original creative brief. If this happens, you should probably sit down with the client and approve a new creative brief.

## 2. Design

The lion’s share of the creative work is done in the design phase. This is where you invent visual solutions, where your predesign research takes on actual visual form. New media designer Hillman Curtis says designers are like translators: They take ideas expressed in words and translate them into visual language. He calls this process “making the invisible visible.” The design phase is where this occurs. The vague ideas of the creative brief are gradually translated into mock-ups that the client can see.

There is no substitute for the actual design phase. Predesign leads into design, and development fleshes out design, but neither is design. In this sense, graphic design is a bit like creative writing. In the creative writing process, you start with an outline and you finish with editing, but at some point you have to sit down and actually craft the prose itself. Gertrude Stein

said of the process, “Creation must take place between the pen and the paper, not before in a thought or afterwards in a recasting.” Likewise, your actual graphic design solutions are created during the design phase, once you begin sketching in physical or digital design space.

Despite the crucial function of the design phase, it is frequently rushed: You are on a tight deadline and the development is going to take a lot of time, so you rush through design and dive into development as quickly as possible. This is a bad idea. Your design will only be as strong as your design concept, and your design concept is often discovered and refined during design phase explorations.

The design phase breaks up into three sequential steps.

#### SKETCH

Before you even turn on a computer, take out your pencil and flip open a sketchbook. Return to your creative brief and explore core themes and concepts that arise. Feel free to go back and forth in your sketchbook between descriptive words and visual concepts. You are moving from thinking textually to thinking visually. Depending on your medium, make thumbnail sketches, draw storyboards, sketch logo marks.

This step of the design phase is largely personal. You probably won’t show these sketches to the client. If you’re not a great illustrator, don’t worry about beautiful draftsmanship. These are rough sketches for your own personal reference, a low-pressure way of easing into the actual design process.

#### ASSEMBLE

Based on ideas and concepts that arise from your rough sketches, begin to get more specific. Turn on a computer and open up your design software of choice. Use type studies to try out different typefaces applied to the text you know you want to use. Do color scheme studies in which you choose a palette. In your software or notebook, do form studies that balance shapes, lines, textures, positive and negative space, and other design elements. Shoot or acquire imagery and begin combining it with your color scheme and your typefaces. Alter your color scheme to fit the imagery. Experiment with composition and balance. Explore various layouts.

All these approaches will vary depending on your medium and the nature of the project. Don’t worry about editing at this point. The more paths you explore, the more source material you’ll have available for later use.

#### MOCK UP

In the mock-up step, you are working toward a design or several designs that you will present to the client. Some designers allow their client to review their work during the sketching and assembling steps—the argument being that the more you involve the client throughout the process, the less chance there is for miscommunication and misunderstanding. Other designers don’t show the client any visual work until the mock-up phase.

There are two arguments for this approach:

1. Sketching and assembling are private

processes for the designer's own brain, and the client would only be micromanaging during those steps. 2. Sketching and assembling are by necessity incomplete. The client is likely to confuse such work with finished mock-ups and judge it harshly, based on its level of incompleteness rather than its conceptual merit.

How many mock-ups do you show the client? This is the million-dollar question. Legend has it that design master Paul Rand only showed one logo mock-up to his clients. This approach makes some sense. The client is hiring you to do the best work possible. Presenting them with three mock-ups suggests that you can't tell which is best. Just pick the best one and show it to them.

On the other hand, for my last book, *Fresh Styles for Web Designers*, for New Riders (2002), design firm Segura Inc. presented us with 20 mock-ups of the cover. This approach makes some sense as well. You're telling the client, "We're so creative we can come up with 20 approaches, one of which you'll surely like. We trust your judgment. Whichever one you choose, it's going to be good."

Conventional wisdom is that you should show clients three mock-ups—one they'll probably choose, one a bit more conservative, and one a bit more daring. That way, you cover a range somewhere near where you think they want to be. But even if you show only three final mock-ups, you are free to make as many

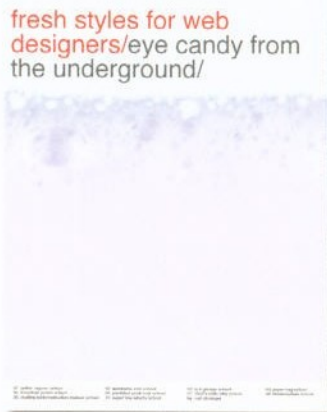
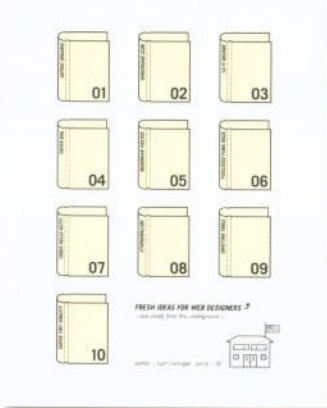
preliminary mock-ups as it takes to arrive at those three.

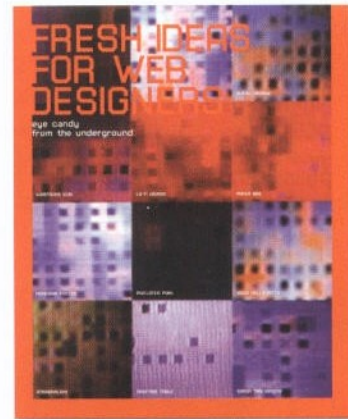
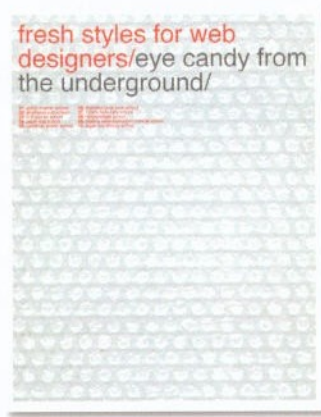
However you decide to present your mock-ups, be prepared to explain your design decisions to your clients. Here again, developing your social skills is worthwhile. Amazing as it may seem, clients are not always able to immediately intuit the sheer unadulterated genius of every design you present.

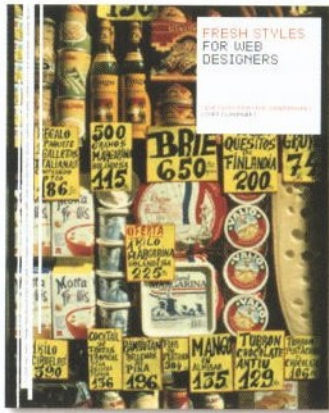
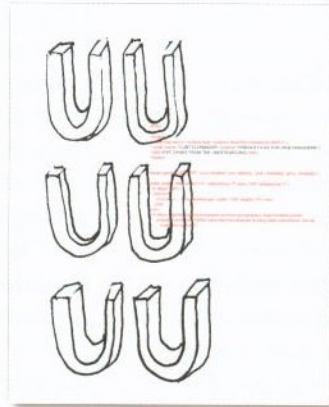
I require my multimedia design students to turn in lots of "threes" (or multiples thereof) throughout the creative process—three written ideas for a project, nine sketches of a logo, three refined variations of a logo in digital form, three mock-ups of a magazine advertisement, nine thumbnail sketches of a web page layout, three mock-ups of an interactive navigation solution, and so on. Invariably a student protests, "But I already know exactly what I want to do." I answer, "Great, you've got your first mock-up. Now do two more." More often than not, the second and third mock-ups are better than the first.

There is something liberating about getting that first idea out of your mental space and into design space. It clears out your head so that you can consider the problem from a different perspective. It also takes the pressure off. You've got at least one solution if nothing else works. Now you are free to explore, play, and risk more daring solutions.

Segura Inc. presented 20 mock-ups for the cover of *Fresh Styles for Web Designers*. The empty refrigerator was the one chosen.







### 3. Develop

This phase varies greatly from medium to medium. For a two-dimensional CD cover or poster, the difference between your digital mock-up and your developed piece might not be much. In that case, this is the paper selection, prepress, and color correction phase. However, in interactive media, video, book production, architecture, corporate identity—any media of scale, movement, or function—the development phase is critical because you have something that must work or move or stand up or be applied interpretively.

In these media, there is still plenty of room—and need—for creativity in the development phase. It's just a different kind of creativity than in the design phase. The way a Web site rollover functions, the way a scene is lit, the manner in which a book is composited—all are areas that require a creative eye that is in sync with the overall goals of the project. Even in this phase, it is prudent to revisit the creative brief.

The development phase breaks up into three iterative steps.

#### BUILD

Develop the project to completion. Build it. Make it. Shoot it. Postproduce it. Code it. Composite it. Whatever. There may be interim, semifunctional demo versions along the way, but ultimately this step results in a final functional version that (according to your best guess) is ready to be distributed.

#### TEST

Show your built project to a user test group and assess its feedback. Experts are forever debating what constitutes optimal user testing. Probably the test audience doesn't have to be that large, but it should represent your target demographic as precisely as possible. The challenge is to create a test environment that accurately simulates the real world and then interpret your user response data in a useful way. (What constitutes "useful" is the key question.) This is practically impossible, since the very act of testing creates an artificial environment different from a real-world environment. However, imperfect and inexact as user testing may be (despite a myriad of rigorous "expert" methodologies), some form of user testing is better than no testing at all.

#### REVISE

Since user testing is at best a simulated situation, you're not obliged to take every bit of unfiltered user feedback as gospel truth. Assess the feedback and improve upon the aspects of your design that you agree are problematic based on your broader understanding of the project's goals. Revise the design and rebuild.

### 4. Implement

You can repeat the steps of the development phase forever, but at some point you will have to abandon your quest for hypothetical perfection, go with your best guess, and proceed to the implementation phase. As Apple CEO Steve Jobs famously observed, "Real artists ship." An

architect who never gets hired to design any actual 3D buildings is called a “paper architect.” It doesn’t matter how ingenious his blueprints are: unless he actually gets some buildings built, the history of architecture will not remember him. By the same token, real designers implement. It doesn’t matter how well the design succeeds in the hypothetical test environment of the development phase. How a design weathers the implementation phase is the true test of its success.

The implementation phase breaks up into three nonsequential, iterative steps.

#### DISTRIBUTE PUBLICLY

Publish, go live, launch, or screen. Your client puts the work out there to be seen and used.

#### MARKET

Prior to and during distribution, your design solution is marketed. Sometimes your graphic design itself does the marketing, but often this happens in conjunction with press releases, reviews, or other types of collateral marketing. If you work for a marketing firm, you are in charge of the marketing. If you work at a graphic design company subcontracted by a marketing firm, the details of the marketing are out of your hands. In either case, make sure your design solution dovetails with your client’s collateral marketing approach.

#### MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE

A Web site requires maintenance and improvement. Even a print campaign can benefit from ongoing maintenance and regular improvement.

Designers who incorporate maintenance and improvement into their overall design process are the ones who maintain a stable of regular clients because their job for these clients is never finished. Such designers practice design as an ongoing process. They are always chatting up future ad campaigns, 2.0 versions, and perpetual branding.

If improvement is required in the implementation phase, does this mean the design failed? Not at all. The only way to learn whether a solution actually works is to implement it and see if it does. With this in mind, Web design companies such as Chicago’s 37 Signals have begun to fold the testing and revision of development into the maintenance and improvement steps of the implementation phase. The idea is to move from hypothetical prototype testing to working product as quickly as possible.

With Basecamp, a 37 Signals online software product, the company has remained nimble enough to respond to user feedback and implement ongoing improvements during distribution. Instead of receiving hypothetical feedback from a test group that may not represent its actual target audience, the company receives feedback from real users of its product. In this paradigm, the user is much more involved in the development of the product. The target audience is not a group to be manipulated and feared, but an advocate whose critical feedback is solicited and encouraged. In order to succeed with this open development approach, the design firm must be honest, transparent, and vulnerable. A huge helping of customer service social skills also comes in handy.



## Variations on the Creative Process

Although every creative process can be reduced to the four simple phases of *predesign*, *design*, *development*, and *implementation*, some designers have discovered that tweaking the process can make it better fit individual projects or media. Some variations on the creative process are particularly ingenious because of the novelty of their approach. Others are remarkably suited to a particular task. What follows is a brief consideration of some of them. I've highlighted the aspects of each process that make it unique.

### AIGA: Designing Solutions

AIGA (the professional association for design) has developed a three-step process that is intentionally generalized so that it can be applied to almost any medium: *define the problem*, *innovate*, and *create value*. Nowhere in this process is any type of media deliverable mentioned. The AIGA paradigm is particularly instructive. You are designing a *solution*. You are not designing a video spot or a poster or a Web site. Those are merely the media through which your *solution* may be expressed. This way of

thinking puts the emphasis on conceptual problem solving throughout the process.

For example, in the standard four-step design process, you build your project in the development phase. In the AIGA process, you “activate your solution” in the “value generation” phase. The actions taken are the same in both processes, but the wording of the AIGA process intentionally foregrounds solutions and value generation rather than simply talking about building stuff.

The AIGA process also places a unique emphasis on team leadership. At the end of each phase, there is a managerial step. At the end of the first phase (define the problem), the team leader incites support and action. At the end of the second phase (innovate), she enables the team to work as a team. At the end of the third phase (generate value), her team “tacks,” based on its successes and failures.

### Hillman Curtis: New Media Design

In his book *MTIV (Making the Invisible Visible)*, new media designer Hillman Curtis proposes a seven-step process: *listen*, *unite*, *theme*, *concept*, *eat the audience* (figure out what makes the audience tick), *filter*, and *justify*. Although each of these steps folds into the standard four-step creative process well enough, Curtis's model emphasizes two particularly useful elements.

When you unite your creative team around the project, think of your client as a member of that team. Your client is not the “noncreative entity,” the “other,” or the “necessary evil.”

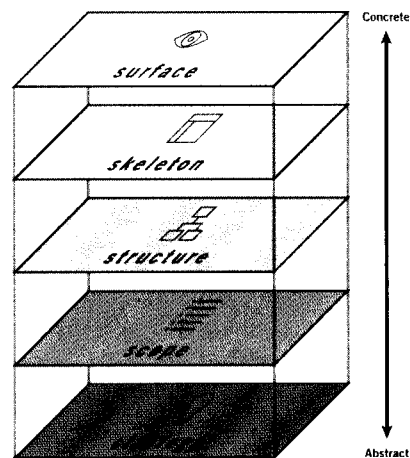
Instead, your client is a member of the creative team with unique insight due to his intimate knowledge of his own product, company, and market.

“Filter” simply means to consider the limitations of your medium and let them inform your design approach. This is particularly necessary when you’re designing low-bandwidth, online media because it has such stringent resolution limitations. But every medium has its own limitations. For example, print is limited compared to video in that print can’t move. Furthermore, all communications media are limited compared to existence itself because all deliver mediated experiences rather than actual experiences. How you approach the inherent limitations of your medium can determine the success of your project.

## Jesse James Garrett: User-Centered Web Design

User experience consultant Jesse James Garrett’s creative process is novel, refreshing, and useful. Garrett first describes the five “planes” of a Web site, from front-end interface to back-end strategy. Then these planes become the actual chronological phases of his Web design process. From bottom to top, the planes/phases are: *strategy*, *scope*, *structure*, *skeleton*, and *surface*. Any decision you make at the strategy plane necessarily limits the decisions you are able to make at the subsequent scope plane, and so on.

By relating the “architecture” of your actual media to the chronology of your process, this model forces your graphics decisions to be based on your layout decisions, which in turn are based on your information architecture decisions, which in turn are based on your functional requirements, which in turn are based on your strategic goals. Garrett’s process is not merely a series of chronological phases. Instead, each phase is structurally related to the phases that precede and follow it, and to the functional structure of the site itself.



Jesse James Garrett’s model for the five elements of user experience: The bottom layers correspond to the back-end functionality of the Web site and to the beginning of the creative process. The top layers correspond to the front-end design of the Web site, and to the end of the creative process.

## Strengths and Weaknesses of the Creative Process

### Tony Spaeth: Corporate Identity

Corporate identity expert Tony Spaeth has developed an involved creative process for corporate identity development because it is a necessarily involved process. Two elements of Spaeth's process are particularly noteworthy for any designer.

It begins with a proposal phase. Before the contract is even signed, all the preliminary dialogue between the designer and the client is considered to be the first phase of the creative process. If the client doesn't hire the designer, the process is aborted or shelved. If the client does hire the designer, the proposal phase leads directly into the rest of the process. This formalizes and includes an important but often overlooked phase of the process—the precontract dialogue between client and designer. Once you are hired, you don't have to revisit everything that was discussed prior to your being hired.

Prior to Spaeth's implementation phase, an entire phase is devoted to implementation planning. Since corporate identity is more holistic than merely designing a logo, the implementation phase is planned in great detail—from how the new identity will be applied across corporate media such as stationery, Web sites, vehicles, building signage, and marketing materials, to how the new identity will be introduced to the public. This additional planning phase illustrates the fact that different design disciplines require different creative processes.

The creative process is great as far as it goes, but it doesn't automatically make you creative. As an idea-generating tool, it has its share of strengths and weaknesses. Its basic strength is that it gives you something to hot-wire. Its basic weakness is that it doesn't come pre-hot-wired.

### Strengths

*It saves energy.* Adherence to a creative process keeps you from having to reinvent the wheel every time you tackle a new design project.

*It results in consistency of design work.* If you adhere to the same creative process, your work will be more consistent from project to project. This doesn't mean that your work will be identical because the process allows for variation as dictated by the particular needs of the project.

*It results in consistency of design practice.* By adhering to the same creative process, repeat clients and referred clients will know what to expect from you. This will make them more comfortable, which will lead to better communication, which will lead to better work.

*It gives you something to "work" when you are creatively dry.* The creative process is a way to prime your creative pump. Simply by going through the motions of the process, you eventually fall into a familiar, creative groove that allows work to flow. Even designers who are skeptical of the practical, analytical benefits of the predesign phase will still go through it, almost as a ritualistic warm-up exercise for the

design phase. If the design phase is like sex, then the predesign phase is like foreplay—a way to get in the mood before the creative fireworks actually begin.

*It can lead to unforeseen places.* This is a huge strength. As Bruce Mau observed, you may not know where you are going when you start out, but you'll know that you want to be there.

## Weaknesses

*One size does not fit all.* No single creative process perfectly suits every design project. You want to be flexible and have a backup plan when you run into a wall. You could transition to an entirely different creative process, or you could simply supplement your process with various strategies and approaches that have proved useful in the past. This book presents a number of such supplemental approaches.

*It doesn't automatically generate quality design.* The process can suggest a creative solution, but it doesn't automatically generate one. The themes and goals of your predesign phase don't magically transform themselves into compelling visual concepts simply because you follow the creative process. Otherwise, anybody could be a great designer, and we know this is not the case. Creative processes don't generate design; you do.

*It doesn't automatically generate "art."* Graphic design pioneer El Lissitzky claimed that design = problem + invention + art. The problem and invention components are dealt with

directly in the creative process. The creative process can literally be thought of as problem assessment followed by solution invention. So where does the art come in? The art is that extra, special, unnameable something that transforms a serviceable design into a resonant, memorable design. It has less to do with *which* process you work and more to do with *how* you work it. Lissitzky probably never would have phrased it this way, but the art is a function of hot-wiring.

