15 Things To Remove From Your Website Immediately

by Brent Brotine
photos by Michael Tanimura

It sounds like a clickbait headline, but in truth it’s part of the great advice C3 members recently received from one of today’s leading web content experts, Andy Crestodina, co-founder of Chicago’s Orbit Media. An in-demand speaker at national conferences, and author of Content Chemistry, Andy brought his superpowers in content marketing, SEO and web design to C3’s April 27 meeting held at Lumity.

Andy’s presentation, Web Design & Neuromarketing, covered how our cognitive biases can be leveraged in the design and content of websites. Andy is a strong proponent of using the tools of brain science to increase website conversion rates by making strong connections with visitors.

Some of Andy’s recommendations are to replace vague homepage headlines with clear copy that describes what you do. To move social media icons out of your header and put them in your page footer, to not send visitors away prematurely. To eliminate meaningless section headers like “Special Announcements” or “Categories.” And to break up long paragraphs into easy scannable content, using no more than 3 to 4 sentences per paragraph.

As a believer in using science to make better decisions, Andy told us about the benefits of using UsabilityHub.com to test web designs and keep up with the latest findings in UX. And as a marketer at heart, he cautioned the audience to remember that while everyone talks about Search Engine Optimization, what really matters to companies with products and services to sell is Conversion Rate Optimization.

To see the core of Andy’s C3 presentation, as well as other enlightening presentations Andy has prepared, visit youtu.be/DdLPWl9INBA.
A New Creative Future.

Recently, I was introduced to the Enneagram, a model of the human psyche which is principally understood and taught as a typology of nine interconnected personality types. It focuses on three crucial aspects of personal development: psychological, spiritual and somatics. “Stemming from the Greek words ennea (nine) and grammos (a written symbol), the nine-pointed Enneagram symbol represents nine distinct strategies for relating to the self, others and the world. Each Enneagram type has a different pattern of thinking, feeling and acting that arises from a deeper inner motivation or worldview.”

The power of the Enneagram is the dynamic unveiling of our own story or narrative. A self-reflection on our greatest strengths and recognizing and acknowledging the things that trigger us. The power of the Enneagram comes when we share our narrative with others. Through this method of engagement, we gain insight and understanding of others. We, in essence, become each other’s teachers. It is vulnerable to express our own narrative. At times I was reluctant to tell my narrative to others for fear of being rejected. On the flip side, I have experienced rich exchanges by telling my story.

As much as the Enneagram is about an individual’s personality and how they see and interact with the world, it also highlights how the qualities of one personality type can complement and support someone with an opposite type.

Reflecting on the year I celebrate all the different personalities that make up C3. A mix of personalities that collaborated for a greater overall strength. Board members and members that brought their own stories to the table to bring diverse programs and community events to C3, from “Getting Creative with Google” to learning about the wonderful world of virtual and augmented reality. A survey was created and with members responses, we have a compass for designing events and programs to benefit our group. A new collaboration for mentoring creative students at Columbia was initiated. C3 was selected to participate in the LakeFX hosted by the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.

Thank you to Kathy Quintanar, for serving as Board Secretary since 2015. We appreciate her remarkable commitment and support to C3. Her energy and devotion to the role were greatly appreciated.

With all of that, I look forward to the coming year with our continuing board members and our newly elected board members. Will you join us in designing a narrative that will take us into a new creative future?

1 Enneagram Studies in the Narrative Tradition, 2017

We welcome editorial submissions (including opinion pieces) that may be of interest to our readers. E-mail your articles or ideas to Brent Brotine at brent@brotine.com. Please note that we reserve the right to edit or reject any articles submitted to C3. Note that this newsletter does not return unsolicited materials. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author(s), not those of Chicago Creative Coalition.

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Sunny side up!

by George Berlin

It’s that time of year again, folks...

The Program Planning BBQ! Come let us know what you’d like to see and help CREATE this year’s slate of incredible member-driven programs and events.

Last year, we focused on exciting cutting-edge technology and new roads to travel, like augmented reality to add interaction to, well, everything! We plugged into virtual reality to build entirely NEW worlds to explore and brought the real one into 360 degrees for some play time.

We bounced around and jousted at a trampoline park, had fun smashing some pins at Rock ‘n’ Bowl and we even traveled an ACTUAL new road, with an enlightening and fun tour exploring the design and history of the 606. We probed your mind with neuromarketing for Web design and tried out crazy toys, tools, and apps for shooting and editing videos that tell compelling stories to get your message to the world.


We’ve already cooked up a few ideas for the fall including a copyright program with a leading expert that’s sure to be a big hit and another art walk exploring a different Chicago area neighborhood.

Who’s got a great idea for the Holiday Party? We’re all ears!

FROM THE BOARD

The Pulse of C3

by Kathy Quintanar

I recently read an article claiming that a person’s average life expectancy can vary by as much as 20 years, depending whether the county they live in is affluent or economically-challenged. The highest life expectancy rates were shown in coastal counties and counties with the greatest number of college graduates. And the gap is getting bigger every year.

No one can say what one’s lifespan will be, and the reasons some people live into their nineties and others only into their fifties aren’t always clear. Nevertheless, most people do believe the better off one is financially, the less one has to worry. And the medical profession has long recommended the strategy of healthy living and plenty of activity for a longer life.

My theory is that this works for organizations like C3, too. The more you put into an organization, the more invested the membership is. 2017 marks the 40th year for C3 and our mission of bringing creative professionals together to engage in plenty of healthy living and lots of activities to keep things interesting.

The C3 Board meets every month on the first Tuesday, and ideas are always welcome. Our team has a lot of fun planning upcoming programs and events, and we can always use more participants. Think about what your favorite C3 event has been (mine was George Berlin’s Photo Mashup for Chicago Artists Month) and help us plan a worthy sequel. If you’re willing, step up!

Sources:
n.pr/2pes7MJ
ja.ma/2re3SmC

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The current buzz among commuters who walk to and from Chicago’s train stations daily is the stunning digital sculpture inside the lobby of 150 North Riverside—a 127-ft. long streaming video wall with rotating imagery that interacts with the environment. The masterminds behind this? Chicago creative agency Leviathan who views themselves at the nexus of design, digital media and interaction.

Sixteen C3 members were privileged to visit Leviathan’s West Loop offices on Wednesday, March 29th, where their tools and techniques were on display. After a presentation of their showreel, featuring stellar work for clients including Nike, BMW, Fox Sports, Vizio, Ubisoft and more, we gathered around their custom workstations to see some of the programs behind the magic.

George Berlin added his own tips and tricks on using Adobe Premiere to wrap photos and create 360 degree videos for Facebook and YouTube. We watched some of the effects that can be created with open source 3D editors, and created panoramic images on the spot. A highlight of the evening was experimenting with professional-grade VR headsets and seeing how users can walk around in virtual worlds.

Everyone received a Knox V2 Google Cardboard-based viewer so we could continue the fun at home using our smartphones. As a bonus, Michael Tanimura’s aunt Jo sent over batches of sugar cookies for all of us to taste test!
C3 Pulls Off Another Most Excellent Con Job

by Michael Tanimura
photos Stephen Starr, Michael Tanimura and Cynthia McEwen

This year’s iteration of the City’s annual convention in support of Chicagoans working in the arts, Lake FX Creative Con, marked the eighth year of involvement for Chicago Creative Coalition. As in years past, C3 members manned a table in the Cultural Center, showcasing the organization and conferring with artists from all over Chicagoland.

New this year were ACCESS Labs: hands-on, one-on-one offerings by organizations meant to make an impact with individual participants. C3 members Kathleen Kearns, George Berlin, Nate Marks, Michael Tanimura and Linda Levy (over an amazing dinner prepared by Linda’s husband Yervant) brainstormed a portfolio and pitch review activity entitled Finding Your Edge: Personal Branding that Stands Out. The idea was so well received by event planners that C3 was asked to conduct the ACCESS Lab activity during both days of Lake FX, April 21 and 22, 2017. C3 volunteers Carolyn Aronson, Linda Levy, Cindy McEwen, John Schmelzer, Stephen Starr and Michael Tanimura did get a chance to help creatives present their work and themselves through illustration, graphic design and photography. The downside was C3ers only reviewed three portfolios in total.

To those who had been to this event in other years, turnout seemed very light, and also younger artists were not represented heavily—although John did have a great conversation and informal critique of a 13-year-old budding illustrator’s work, which was greatly appreciated.

Appreciation was expressed by all Finding Your Edge participants; it just would have been nice to have been of service to more artists.

The event was a great success in peer-to-peer networking efforts, however.

Once again, C3 came away with potential collaborations or program offerings from half a dozen organizations unknown to it before the event.

Will this be C3’s last Creative Con? The Board has about nine months to decide that question, and as we all know, a lot can happen in that time span.

Wearing Our Mentoring Hats At Columbia

by Michael Tanimura

Chicago Creative Coalition has been strengthening our relationship with Columbia College Chicago, both to grow our organization as well as help fulfill the educational component of our mission. On April 19, 2017, four C3 members took part in CAAN Connect: Chicago, a speed-networking event for Columbia College alumni.

Organized by C3 Program Director George Berlin—who was unable to attend as he was educating children in Pakistan that evening—his recruits Linda Levy, Warren Perlstein, Kathy Quintanar and Michael Tanimura evaluated pitches and provided motivation to Columbia alumni in communication arts fields.

The 60 alumni participating spanned from recent graduates to more seasoned veterans who were switching careers or jobs—whether willingly or not. While none of the C3 members was able to offer new employment opportunities, they all gave sound advice and direction to their networking partners.

C3 will continue to work closely with Columbia College to help meet student needs. Next up on May 11, 2017, T. J. Hine, Warren, Linda and other members will participate in a review of photography portfolios.
As a photographer, I've been frustrated trying to find well-built yet affordable frames, especially in odd sizes. With the large stack of old wood I've salvaged from our home rehab or recovered from the alley, I decided to make my own frames. I started with basic woods and moved into more decorative art pieces, incorporating multiple woods, glass, stone, marble, mirrors, and old hardware. Beginning as a hobby to build frames for my own work, it’s turned into an opportunity to sell frames and to create shabby chic items as well.

1. 11 x 14 Frame—Reclaimed cedar planks, hand-cut marble mosaic inlay by C3 artist Laura Marie Sanchez, honey finish
2. 11 x 14 Frame—Reclaimed hardwood flooring/pine board remnants joinery
3. 9½ x 10¼ Framed Mirror—Reclaimed 80-year old tongue-in-groove flooring from a home in Pittsburgh, PA
4. 9½ x 24 Framed Mirror—Reclaimed door jamb from an 1890 Victorian home in Chicago; reclaimed hooks from old Pittsburgh home
5. Because I have a hard time throwing anything out, I glued together the scraps leftover from making frames and saw beautiful patterns, which in turn, I made into usable trivets.
1 Quinlan Sumie Tanimura was born at 10am on April 6, 2017, and her moms Danielle and Stephanie couldn’t be happier. At 6 lbs 9oz and 18.5 inches, she’s got some growing to do before she gets her hands on Photoshop, but Grandpa Michael has some big plans for teaching her.

2 Robert Tolchin was one of four artists featured in the Exhibit Aspects of the Whole at Studio Oh! Gallery in Chicago in March and April. Attending the opening with Bob and Linda were C3 friends T. J. and Claudia Hine, Carolyn Aronson and Laura Marie Sanchez.

3 Cindy McEwen and Friend of C3 Gary Adcock attended the James Beard Awards on May 1. Held in Chicago for the 3rd year, the awards honor all thing culinary from restaurants and chefs to cookbooks and TV programs. Cindy and Gary had many gourmet bites, specialty cocktails and great food conversation at the awards themselves as well as many before and after parties. They are still recovering.

4 For spring break Jeff London and Gerta Sorensen, along with their son, Evan, spent some time in Saint Louis, MO. Highlights included visits to The City Museum, Missouri Botanic Garden, the Old Courthouse (site of the Dred Scott decision), and listening to some Saint Louis-style blues. Before heading home, they stopped by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield to see the new exhibit, Cubs vs. Cardinals–The Rivalry.

5 Stephen B. Starr Design, Inc. was named a winner in Graphic Design USA’s 2017 American Web Design Awards. The website created for Mantis Dentistry & Implant Center in Wilmette brought together the talents of Stephen Starr as designer/project manager and Elliott Post as developer.

6 International Moustached Man of Mystery George Berlin traveled around the entire planet on a madcap adventure for all of April. The first two weeks saw George, Marie and her extended family traveling and eating across Taiwan and Korea, riding gondolas, seeing the DMZ, taking highly efficient trains and generally having an awesome time.

   Then George spent the next two weeks in Pakistan on an outreach program, partnering with multiple Oscar and Emmy award winning director Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy to teach storytelling through animation to children in low-income all over Karachi.

7 In the spring, Barbara Counterman and her husband got a new puppy, an adorable, energetic, four-month-old mixed breed stray. She’s not sure of the breed. “All we know is that he will be BIG. He was 40 pounds when we adopted him and growing bigger every day.” She found him online through PAWS Chicago and fell for him right away. “The only sad part is that we had to say goodbye to our sweet Maggie”, she says about their previous dog.
C3 Talks with Robert Tolchin

Company: Robert Tolchin Photography
Occupation: Photographer
Current Project: Commercial and fine art shooting, workshops
Family/Kids/Pets: Wife Linda, Heidi and Tito's Tacos, Los Angeles
Hobbies/Interests: Cycling, reading, cooking. Generally not at the same time.
Three Words that Best Describe Me: Hard to say.
Gadget I Can't Live Without: Camera
Favorite Movies: M*A*S*H
Favorite CDs/Recording Artists: Chicago blues
Favorite TV Show: VEEP
Favorite Restaurant: Tito’s Tacos, Los Angeles
Favorite Way to Chill Out:
Favorite Organizations:
Favorite Food:
Favorite Columnists:
Favorite Way to Chill Out:
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