

GAMESREVIEWS.COM

Daniel Wrigley

IND2038

Designing for the user



Contents

1	ABSTRACT	3
2	SITE GOALS	4
3	USER EXPERIENCE	5
	3.1 Audience	5
	3.2 Competitive Analysis	5
4	PROJECT CONTENT	8
	4.1 Content	8
	4.2 Functional Requirements	10
5	PROJECT STRUCTURE	11
	5.1 Architectural Blueprints	11
	5.2 Global & Local Navigation	11
6	VISUAL DESIGN	12
	6.1 Design Sketches	12
	6.2 Screen Mock-ups	13
	6.3 Prototypes	13
	6.4 fonts	13
	6.5 Mock-ups	14
7	CONCLUSION	17

1 Abstract

A large number of video game review websites exist on the internet and the majority of them are typical in their look and style, over laden with information and graphics making it sometimes very hard to actually navigate through it all.

The majority do cater for all common platforms like PC, PS3 Wii etc and that is definitely something I wanted to achieve also. Unlike most sites as mentioned above the site created was made to be easy to use and to navigate.

On top of that the majority of sites use dynamic PHP or ASP code and as far as I could tell through research there isn't one that uses Flash to display the content and with this brief solely aimed at creating a site in flash and furthering our knowledge it seemed a perfect option to take to fulfil the brief.

To compete within this market of review sites is hard and something unique had to be considered to offer the users a reason to visit and to come back.

The content isn't that of a complete site and is thus only to show how it would work in a commercial environment.

2 Site goals

To create a website using Macromedias Flash program utilising actionscript, mimicking a video games review website to offer insight and opinions on games across all platforms and also some features about games or the society and community around the games industry.

The Features section will be a straight forward and in depth talk about a set topic that the user can see before viewing the feature content.

The reviews section will have images of the games a thorough opinion on the game from my point of view. The games will be rated out of 10 scaling from 1 and also using one decimal point to allow for a more accurate score against other games of similar standards.

The site itself will be minimalist using neutral colours and smooth lines to divide the sections up, straight forward navigation in a stereotypical position

Summary of goals

- To provide the user with independent thoughts on games
- To provide the user with independent review on general topics within the game industry and games.
- For users to get an idea of the rating of games so to help make decisions on purchasing.

3 User experience

3.1 Audience

The target audience of this site is teens to young adult's age group as I feel this reflects the age group of those who are into gaming. This site intends to appeal to both genders and will not alienate any one from a higher age bracket although may provide web copy unsuitable to users of a lower age bracket.

Whilst the content on this site is related to video gamers and anyone interested in purchasing new or old games, it will of course not try to alienate anyone from browsing the site or getting anything out of the visit.

3.2 Competitive analysis

Ign.com

Is a very famous competitor website and is one in particular that has been researched a lot and is a main source of influence for the architecture of gamesreviews.com.



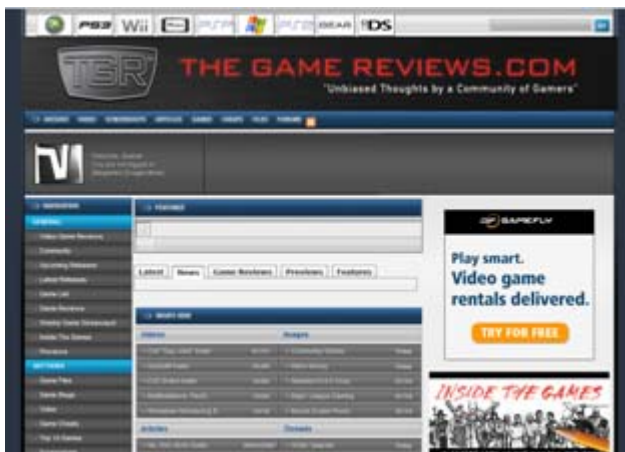
Gamespot

Is another leading competitor and is very easy to navigate and caters for your typical audience that gamesreviews also does. A good site all in all.



Thegamereviews

Another good site that follows a traditional set of design ideas, using menu graphics that look like they come straight from a easy to setup web design package. Easy to navigate and gives decent reviews.



Game Rankings

Well styled site fully dynamic and custom built and certainly created in PHP, good reviews although a little short at times and easy to navigate but not done in flash.



4 Content

4.1 Project Content

There are 2 main sections to the site, Reviews and Features, these sections have to be easy to access and easy to use, simple click system using images to help aid the familiarity of the games for the user to view.

4.1.1 Generic Pages

The generic pages shown here are the pages generally expected to be found on all multi page websites at a basic level.

Home page

The home page is the first point of contact the user will have with this site and will present the general tone of the site. The home page will stick to the same style throughout the lifespan of the site.

- To introduce the user to the site by giving brief description
- To welcome the user to the site
- To give the user an idea of visual identity

Contact Page

The contact page will show the user how they can get in touch with those associated with the running of an site like this; the user will be able to ask questions and give feedback from this area.

4.1.2 Site specific menus

These are the central content areas to be found within this site and the information to be contained on them.

These menus are split into two groups which are further split into 5 sections giving which are the major local navigation links, aside from the generic links the two further global navigation links are:

- Reviews
- Features

Reviews

The reviews section is specially intended for the display of the games that have been reviewed; the main section shows one review from each platform those platforms being:

- PC
- PS3
- Xbox
- Wii
- DS

Each of those reviews will be of a brief selection of important information from the reviews, title, publisher, developer, platform, rating score and an image showing the game and linkable.

Clicking a review link will take the user straight to the main review.

Inside each sub section will show you the list of games that have been reviewed so the user can choose which game they want to read.

Features

This section is a special section that talks about general topics that are going around the games industry and gamers community, very much like the reviews section it has quick links on its main page to take the user straight to some of the most recent posts.

4.2 Functional requirements

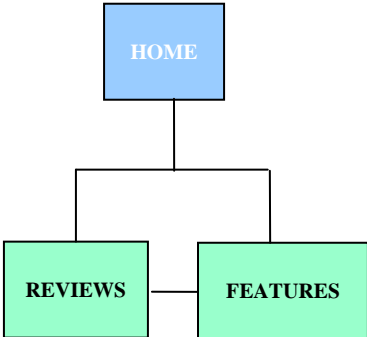
This website is to be created entirely in macromedia Flash 8. The final product will then be embedded into a webpage using html, CSS and Dreamweaver. The site is not intended to be dynamic and will therefore not require a database for its content. Any video audio content included will be self sufficient through the use of flash.

The website will ultimately be accessed by the user and the user will therefore need the minimum of the following:

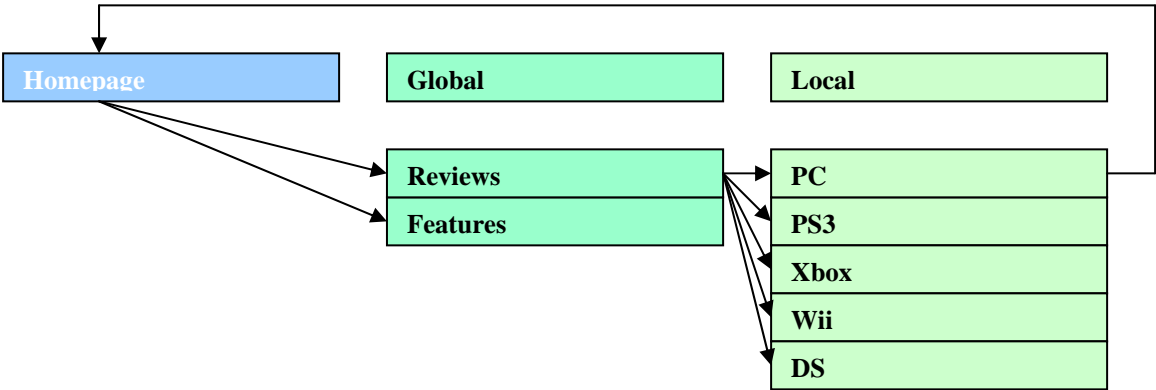
- A compatible web browser
- The relevant version of flash player? With the option to redirect if not already installed
- Designed for a resolution of 800 x 600

5 Project structure

5.1 Architectural Blueprints



5.2 Global & Local Navigation



6 Visual Designs

6.1 Design Concept

The reason for the design was largely due to growing tired of the way the many of existing game review websites display their own content and wanted to break away from that stereotypical format.

Using Flash in itself was straight away making the site original as in my research I failed to find a site created purely in flash for this type of site, most are all dynamically driven and for that most use PHP or ASP to achieve this, you can use PHP within Flash but that is something I certainly cant manage or understand currently.

Most of my sites if not all have always used container and when doing so the corners have been squared truth be know I have grown tired of that factor but to change it means knowing photoshop and creating your images then implementing them to the site, that is a lot easier when using Flash so I jumped at the chance to do so in this project.

The way the featured game reviews are displayed was pre designed in my head, unfortunately I didn't draw this down to show as a sketch.

6.2 Identity

The website will always display the sites logo. This logo will serve the purpose of defining the sites identity.

The site uses a simple and easy image to identify logo using the basic colour pallet of the site. The site name Games Reviews.

6.3 Colours

The website uses a very simple three pallet colour scheme of Tan Beige background with white content background to separate those sections with black and red text in set areas and images for the game reviews..

6.4 Fonts

The fonts chosen for this websites content have been chosen as they are widely used and accepted as clear fonts. It is intended that the logo while been of a typographic nature will not use an actual font but instead be created in Photoshop and appear to be a font. This will then be combining with veranda.

6.5 Screen Mock-ups

These mock-ups are how the site is intended to look. This will show the overall look and feel of the site and intention of positioning. These mock ups were created in Photoshop and a working prototype is currently been built.

6.5.1 Main stage



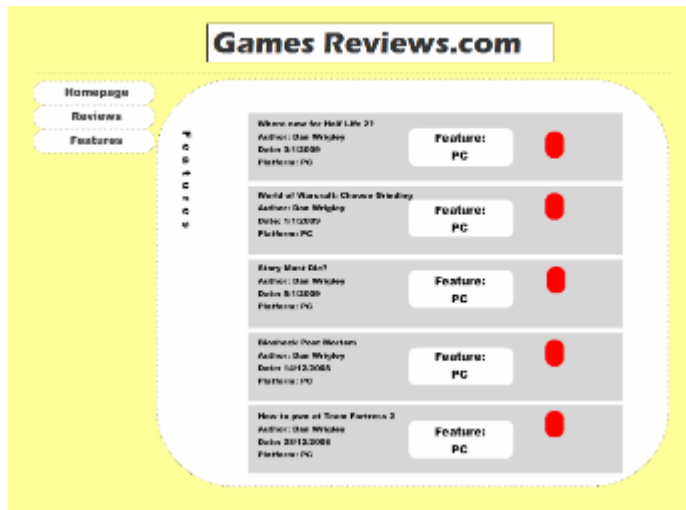
- A simplistic design using neutral colours and smooth edged corners
- A consisted design from issue to issues
- A vibrant and exciting interface reflecting how the content is portrayed to the visitor
- A layout that is interactive with the visitor and will allow the visitor to explore.

6.5.2 Review section content area



- This page transitions to the review sections where you'll find all platform games to view the review.
- This area contains all the featured reviews.

6.5.3 Contact content area



This section has all the feature reports for the stories picked up on around the games industry and gamer community.

If time didn't become a problem this page would have had independent images just like the reviews section does for each game posted.

7 Conclusion

The first time I've tried to make a more complex website solely using Macromedias Flash software and actionscript. It was a massive struggle to even create what I have done as my knowledge in this code and software is not high due to not being interested in learning or using this software and code in my hopeful career as a web designer when I graduate from University.

Knowing that this is not my forte I still believe the site is pretty good for me, yes the design and graphics could be to a greater standard that being time and also knowledge but the code used to make the page work (linked) is pretty good.

Roll on the next Flash project and hopefully that will be the last.

