

# The wonderful world of web

## An interview with Phillip Hasted, web designer

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Digital advertising is big business, and now more designers than ever are rolling up their sleeves and adding more skills to their creative repertoire. As the director of UK-based web design company, Gooii, Phillip Hasted seemed like the perfect person to ask about working with the web. So, we bribed him with a bowl of his favourite cereal and got some inside information on the world of website programming and design...



### How did you get started in web design?

I found school dull but I knew that, if I wanted to get a decent job, I needed to stay on and find something I enjoyed. For me, that was Craft, Design and Technology. After splashing paint around and getting dirty at art school, I gravitated towards interactive-media at university. My first job was as a junior print designer; I pushed for the company to move into the web and was quickly promoted to lead web designer. It wasn't easy though, as the MD believed the net had "no future".

### So how did Gooii come about?

Well, at the time I was working for a design company that specialised in creating websites for education, but I felt they were going about it the wrong way, so I left to start Gooii. There are five company directors at Gooii now, and four of us came from that same company.

### Tell us about a typical day in your job.

After satiating my morning tea habit and having some Frosties, I'll check my news feeds (to keep up to date with technology, design and other news) before updating my blog on the Gooii site and cracking on with my day. This usually involves continuing with a project or working on a new design – which can be anything from illustration, Flash work and building a site in CSS, to project management, writing a quote or liaising with a client.

### What are you working on at the moment?

I'm currently updating the Gooii site – refreshing the design and doing some search engine optimisation. We've also just had a new job come in for a large museum site, so I'll be working on designs for that first. Like most of our projects, it came about through word of mouth and recommendations from other clients.

### What kind of technology do you use?

We use Apple Macs and PCs, running mostly Adobe software. My preference for Macs over PCs comes down to ease of use and their reliability – for me, the Mac feels more solid and precise, which is great when you're working on design, and I prefer the Mac's handling of applications and windows. Adobe's tools are the industry standard, though I think this could change over the coming years with web and open source applications taking over. All coding is done by hand using CSS, jQuery and PHP as we find these to be the most accessible, user friendly and fully featured.

### What sort of skills do you need as a web designer?

It differs for all designers. Personally, I find the fact I can draw incredibly useful. Surprisingly, not all web designers can draw, but I like to sketch out my ideas first (it quickly tells me what works before I move onto the computer). Computer skills are a necessity – it doesn't really matter what platform you choose, but I still think Macs have the edge over PCs. Knowing the various software packages is also a must, as well as having a good grasp of CSS/HTML for building sites.

### How do you think the industry's changed over the years?

I've been in the business for about 12 years, and the biggest change I've seen is that technology is catching up with what designers and programmers want to achieve. The amount of people using the net and computers has also grown to the point where you're released from the responsibilities of teaching people how to use the Internet, which is liberating.

I think the groundwork for the web has been set; everything you can do now will continue, but on a bigger, better and faster scale. The greatest change will be where the net's used; mobile phones have got to the point where we can easily access web content and I see this moving on to more exciting devices.

### What are the best bits of your job?

It's hard work, but it's enjoyable. Being a company director, I love the fact that we respond to the client's needs, rather than a misguided person in a marketing department. We also have a great office and a relaxed atmosphere, which makes Gooii a great place to be.

### And the worst bits?

Stress. Some jobs are inevitably stressful and it can be very hard to switch off when I'm out of the office!

### Do you think it's important for students to learn how to use industry standard tools while they're still at school?

Kids should use whatever software they have available to them, as these skills will almost always migrate. I learned using my Amiga 500 and a bundled copy of Deluxe Paint III! If, however, schools have a choice of design software, they should opt for the industry standard, like CS5, rather than being sold something less intuitive that no one else uses.

### Finally, do you have any advice for students who are thinking about a career in web design?

Absorb everything around you – be influenced by everything you see and hear. Not just by the net, but by films, music, TV, adverts, posters, everything. Be inspired and put this into your work. Ideas are king. A good idea will take you a very long way, but a bad idea will always be exactly that, no matter how hard you polish it.

To find out how to get your students web-savvy, get in touch with us on 03332 409 333 or email [learning@jigsaw24.com](mailto:learning@jigsaw24.com).



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