

Adam Owen makes experiences.

Interactive Writing and User Experience Design.

I use writing and design to tell great interactive stories.

Writing

I started my career as a journalist; a passion that I still try to make time for. Eventually I expanded into copywriting and content marketing, and in my spare time, writing technical and marketing copy for imaginary products.

Design

Writing is only one small part of telling a great story, though. As a designer, I've built the user journeys for websites, apps and games.

Writing Samples

The National Post // Social Media and Pizza
Motherboard // Author Page
Hazelitt // Italian Futurism and Back to the Future
The National Post // Television: Star Trek

Technologies

Adobe Creative Suite/Cloud
Microsoft Office Suite
HTML and CSS
Sketch, Balsamiq and OmniGraffle
Wordpress
Tweetdeck, Hootsuite, Twitter for Business, Facebook Ads, Google Adwords
MailChimp
Game Maker
Arduino and Processing

Work

Interactive Products



Explore Regent Park

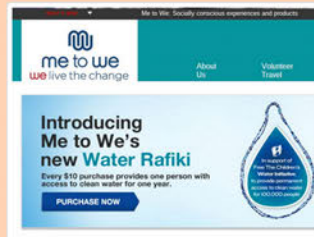


Chill Quest

Websites



Canadian Stage Website

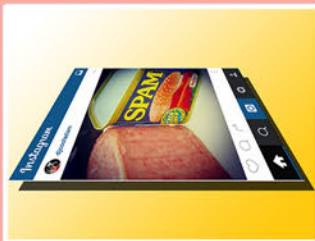


Me to We Website

Additional Projects

Links open in browser

Experiments and Research



LikeSpammer



Pizza is Gross



Design Fiction

Fictions and Futures - Imaginary Products



Media Actuator



Vitalis / Introspection

Explore Regent Park



In 2015, I researched UX Best practices for geolocative content in an educational context. Through this research, I designed an application that delivers locationally relevant educational content to a user walking through Toronto's historic Regent Park neighbourhood, while developing a body of best practices for future educational applications.

These are a few major best practices this project yielded.

Research

The connection between appropriate content and a UX that best enables use cases is important to embrace. As such, as projects develop, recursive content strategy and research should be planned for. Some content is necessary to begin development, but that content will need to adapt.

Working with Community Groups not only helps guide research themes in an authentic way, it opens doors within the community, and can yield better content.

User Experience

While a higher level of interruption is acceptable to a bought-in, passionate user, if that user engages with the application passively, the interruption should be short enough to coax the user to view content while it's still relevant, in order to preserve the value of the application. Still imagery not only is more appropriate for urban use at day and night, but it also reduces interruption and should be used primarily.

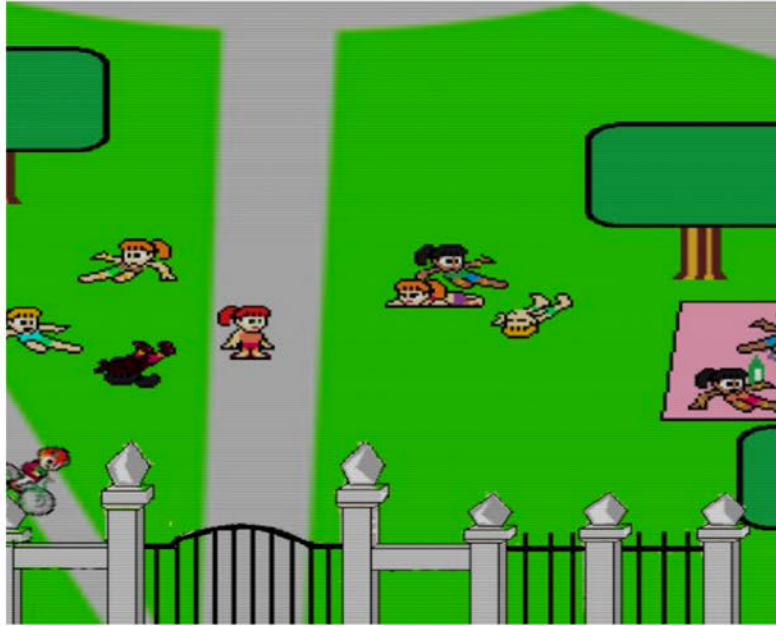
By using game-like language and challenging the user, passive use has the potential to become active use. The user may feel compelled to deviate from their planned route in order to collect a module if they consider it a challenge.

Categorization can preserve context and can be used to guide the user through a linear or semi linear path. It also results in a more organized geofencing, allowing the user better control over their use.

Content

In a small environment with an intersectional narrative, organizing content chronologically preserves context better than thematic organization. However, if this application were to be used on a larger scale, covering numerous neighbourhoods, thematic organization would work better.

Chill Quest



Chill Quest is a retro-inspired platformer set in Toronto's Trinity Bellwoods Park. For this project, I learned basic game programming and design. I also wrote all copy and scripting, and designed all art. Play it [here](#).

Development

I chose to set my first game in Trinity Bellwoods Park as an experiment in taking real world experiences into virtual space. The park is such an important part of the lives of so many young people in the West End of the city, it presented interesting narrative opportunities. By recreating the park as closely as possible, I challenged myself to create a narrative informed by real world experiences.

Feedback

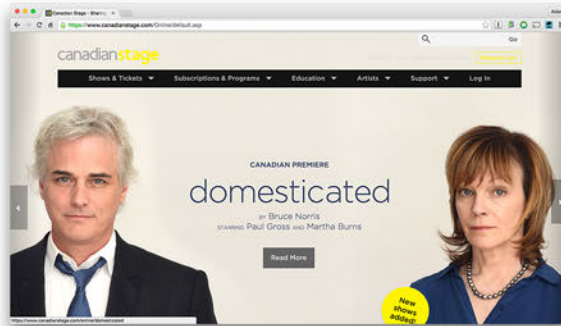
Upon launch of the game, I was overwhelmed with support and interest.

Over 1000 players within the first 48 hours of the game's launch eventually exceeded my bandwidth, taking the site down briefly. Feedback was generally supportive, though I realized that the quest I built wasn't easy enough for people to finish. I made revisions and released a more successful version of the game a week later.

Conclusion

Chill Quest was a successful, well received first game with insights that will be useful not only to the creation of additional games, but other forms of interactive media. My experience highlights the need for a diverse base of testers.

Canadian Stage Website



In 2014, I led the development of a new website for Canadian Stage, a theatre company based in Toronto. This project involved developing use cases and personas based on anecdotal experiences of an in-house telesales team, then designing within the constraints of a unique CMS that posed its own challenges.

The Original Website

The original site worked well enough for Canadian Stage, but did not align with a new brand for the company as set by Artistic Director Matthew Jocelyn. Whereas Canadian Stage was repositioning itself through programming bold and provocative productions, the website was cluttered, tangling diverse audiences throughout a hard to navigate product. The goal was to create a product as incisive and direct as the shows it builds its new reputation on.

The CMS

Canadian Stage uses AudienceView, a CMS, eCommerce and CRM designed for ticketing organizations like those in sports and the performing arts. Due to its role as a ticketing sales solution, previous versions of AudienceView prioritised its eCommerce CRM functions over its CMS capabilities.

In the Summer of 2014, Canadian Stage volunteered to help AudienceView respond to this criticism with the launch a new iteration of its flagship solution that gave designers more control over the look and feel of their websites with new capabilities like CSS Bootstrap.

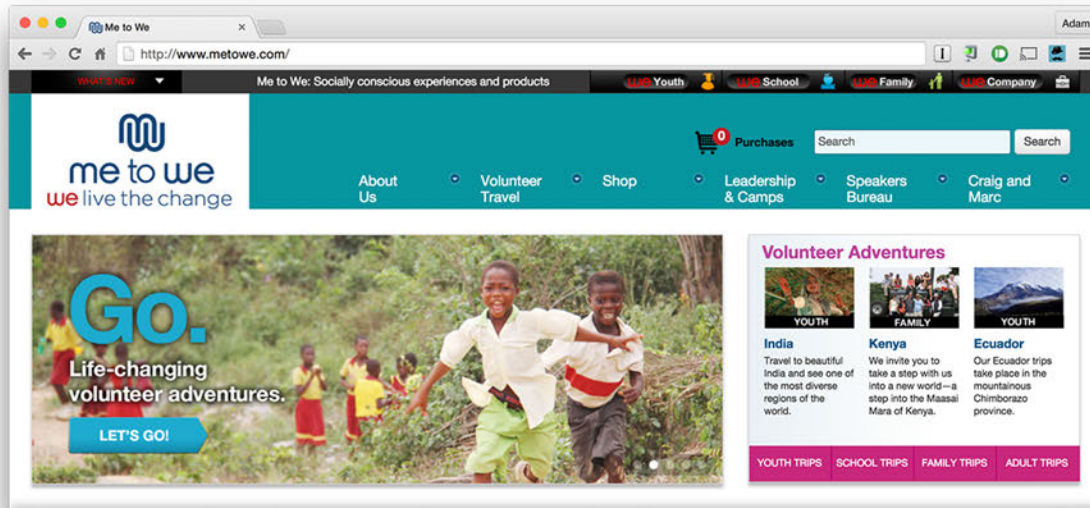
Audiences

I had the benefit of an in-house telesales team who were able to advise on patron concerns and messaging hierarchies, which were invaluable in creating the eventual content strategy. Through interviews with the telesales team, I was able to build personas and use cases that would direct information architecture.

Development

Working with Canadian Stage's Digital Marketing Coordinator, who managed front-end development and design, we adapted assets from the Graphic Design Manager to build a responsive, bootstrap-based series of wireframes, then, upon approval, ported the content over. After a week of testing, Canadian Stage and AudienceView launched the new site in August of 2014, on schedule to begin selling single tickets to the companys fall season.

Me to We Website



In 2012, I managed the UX design and implementation of a new website for Me to We, a partner of Free the Children.

The migration took Me to We from its own obsolete in-house CMS to a new Wordpress implementation that matched a simultaneous move for the Free The Children and We Day websites.

Audiences

Me to We segmented its sales teams to focus on specific audiences, making the discovery process a matter of consulting with subject area experts. Aside from youths aged 13-18, Me to We had corporate, educator and family audiences each with their own products and trips with unique messaging.

Me to We benefitted from an extremely bought in audience, many of whom were willing to take part in focus groups and phone interviews over the course of their sales cycle. From this research, we were able to develop comprehensive personas that, in addition to helping design user experience and content strategy, aided sales staff after the project's completion.

Development

Working with a team of in-house graphic designers and developers, we built a theme that segmented audiences with a 'super header' that stuck to the top of the frame, giving audiences the ability to select their path after they've explored the homepage, prompted by a small but persistent prompt. The ability to take advantage of Wordpress' CSS capabilities made it easier for our developers to realize our designers' visions without resorting to archaic methods like slicing into tables.

Deployment

In July of 2012, we ported content over to the three new sites, launching alongside a global rebrand with entirely new visual identities for all three major brands.