



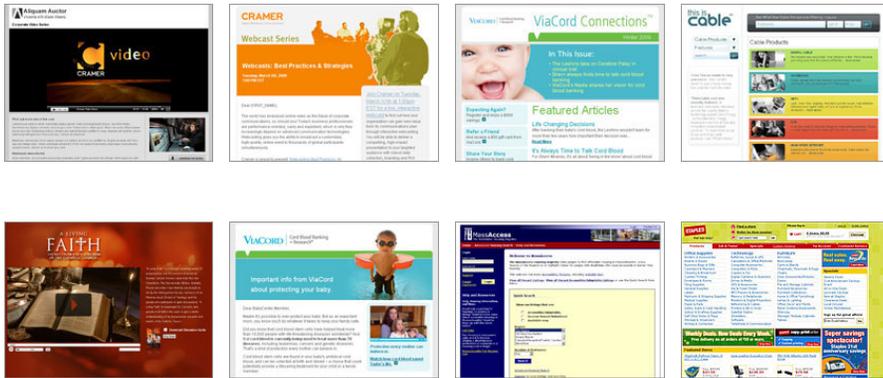
## Working with Visual Designers for Universal Access

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Hello. My name is P.J. Gardner. I am a front-end web developer and accessibility expert.

My talk is entitled, "Working with Visual Designers for Universal Access".

## Great Visual Design can make a Web Site!



Working with a professional Visual Designer is a privilege.

Great visual design can really make a web site, and working with a professional visual designer is a wonderful privilege.

Here are a few web pages that I built for various clients while working with some very sophisticated visual designers.



## Visual Designers may not be thinking about Web Accessibility at all!

- Visual designers are rarely trained in accessibility techniques.
- Many visual designers were trained for print media first.
- Visual designers are usually visual people with excellent color vision and visual acuity.
- Visual designs are usually delivered to web developers as completed Photoshop files with pixel-perfect layouts.
- Visual designers are rewarded for “pushing the envelope”.

But visual designers may not be thinking about web accessibility at all.

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Many visual designers were trained for print media before coming to the web.

Visual designers are usually very visual people with excellent color vision and visual acuity.

Visual designs are usually delivered to web developers as completed Photoshop files with fixed, pixel-perfect layouts.

Visual designers are usually rewarded for “pushing the envelope”.



## What can we teach Visual Designers?

- Introduce visual designers to tools and resources about visual limitations.
- Teach them about the people they may not have thought about with various types of visual impairments.
- Remind them that 1 in 20 people is probably color blind, with 8-12% of men and ½-1% of women of European heritage having some color deficit.
- Turn them on to tools that help make designs more accessible.
- Arm them with facts over which they have control.

What can we teach visual designers about accessibility?

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We can turn them on to tools that help make designs more accessible.

We can arm them with facts over which they have control.  
(See the handout for more details.)

Let's examine a few examples from actual projects.

## Example 1: Run Color and Contrast Tests

- Run a color contrast or color analysis tool, and report the results to the visual designer.



1. Run color and contrast tests, and give the results to the visual designer .

Here, I am testing an HTML email design in Photoshop with the Color Contrast Analysis tool available from the Paciello group.

The color contrast of the white letters on an orange background fails both the minimum and maximum standards.

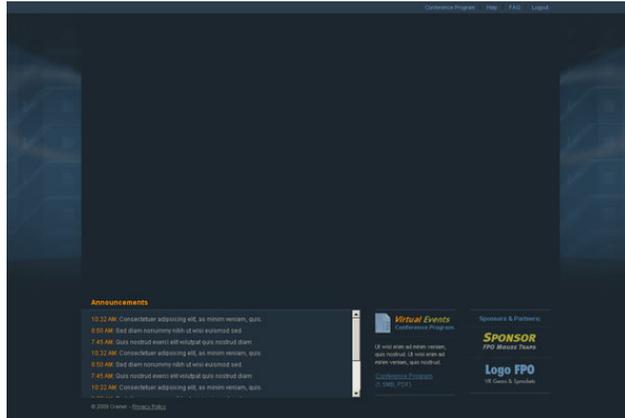
You can also use other testing tools such as Vischeck, which allows you to check how the design will look for someone who is colorblind.

When you are building designs with cascading style sheets, these tools work better on images of pages than the pages themselves.

So you can actually test page designs before you build a thing!

## Example 2: Remind visual designers that all functional elements need to be made accessible.

- Make sure text is text, or can be given a text alternative!



2. Remind visual designers that all functional elements need to be made accessible.

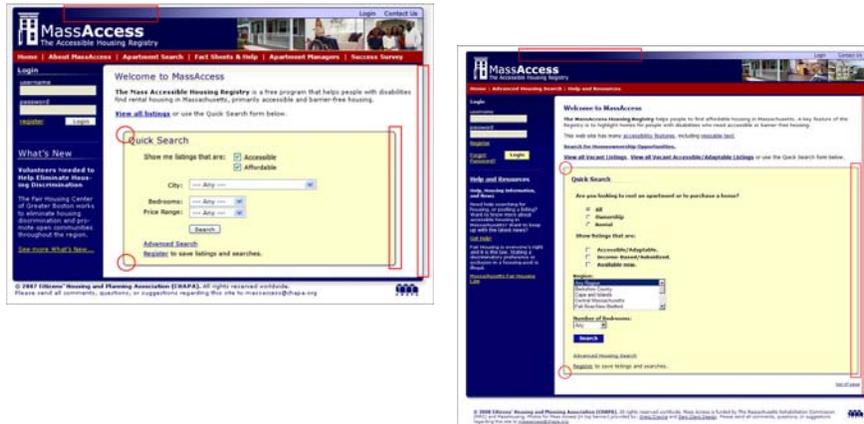
Make sure text is text, or at least can be given a text alternative.

Here is a template for a flash video application. Notice that when the video is not displayed, there is zero branding identity. You have no idea whose page this is.

The video itself has no functional equivalent, either, which in this case, is critical because the flash video includes the logon and navigation for the entire application.

### Example 3: Advocate for Modifying the Design

- When necessary, get support from project management to adjust the design for accessibility.



### 3. Advocate for modifying the design.

When necessary, get support from project management to adjust the design for accessibility.

This example is an accessible application built for a Massachusetts agency. It allows people with disabilities to search for accessible housing.

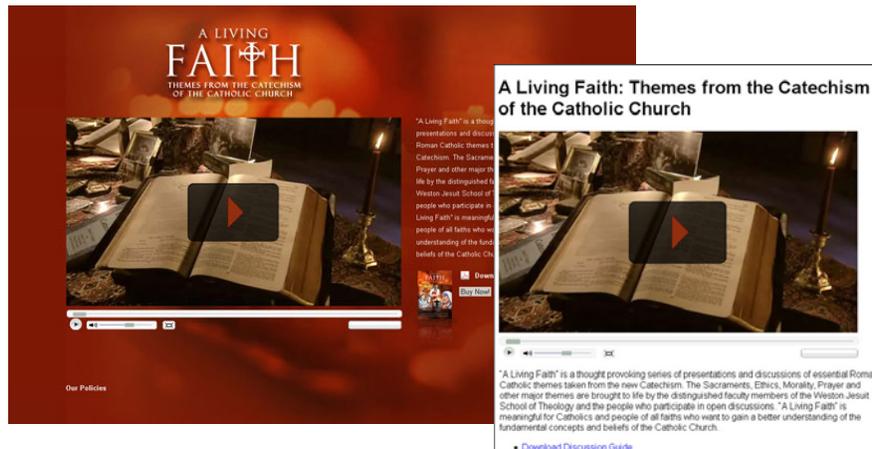
The design had to be accessible.

The Photoshop version is on the left, and the application as built is on the right.

We eliminated decorative elements such as round corners and some of the drop shadows. This allowed the modules of the application to be supplied dynamically, and the pages to resize automatically in all browsers.

## Example 4: Just Do It!

- There's a lot you can do to bring your own accessibility skills to a project without changing the design.



4. [Maybe this slide should have come first.] Just do it!

Use your own accessibility coding skills to render the visual designer's creation with as much accessibility as possible.

Here is a microsite that displays a video, both with and without its cascading style sheet.

The cascading style sheet displays the title of the page as a background image.

When the style sheet is turned off, the page title is displayed as a Heading 1.

When the style sheet is turned on, the title is positioned far off-screen so it doesn't get in the way of the visual design.

So there is actually a lot you can do when you work with visual designers to achieve accessibility for people with visual impairments and more universal access in general.

This presentation is just the tip of the iceberg.



Thank You! Questions?

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Thank you.

Any questions?