Interface Design for Web Apps

FOWA Miami, 2008

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Why are we here?
Why are you here?
http://superfluousbanter.org/workshops/2008/fowa-miami

(the slides will be here later)
How are web “apps” different from web “sites”?
Frequency of use.

web apps are more likely to be used regularly, and in many cases receive almost constant use throughout the day by users.
Commitment.

web apps are more likely to require registration/account creation, which increases the time and information commitment required from users...
Commitment.

...which therefore requires you to convince users that it’s worth their time to make that commitment before they ever use your app.
while many web sites provide content to users, a web app is more likely to contain almost entirely user-generated content...
Content.

...and as such, a web app's usefulness is more likely to increase over time; conversely, an app without content is much less useful at the beginning.
Content.

“Content” in this case can be text, stats, users, photos, maps, ideas — any combination of elements that creates value for the user.
web sites can be passive — they can provide information without requiring any direct interaction from the user...
Interaction.

...however, web apps are more likely to be active — to require the active participation of the user in order to perform certain functions.
Let’s see some successful examples:
It all starts with an idea.
Do one thing really well.
Example: MyMileMarker.com
What does it do?

MyMileMarker tracks the mileage you enter after each fill-up, and measures your fuel efficiency and projects usage and costs.
Planning and wireframes

limit the features and carefully evaluate every addition — this will help keep the functionality simple and straightforward.
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### MyMileMarker.com

#### Cars

- **Ford Pinto '58**

#### History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Mileage</th>
<th>Gallons</th>
<th>MPG</th>
<th>Total Mileage</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 12, 2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>14</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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the visual design is an opportunity to get creative, but don’t sacrifice ease of use for good looks — users will forgive “ugly” before “broken”.

Design
Going mobile.
Does your app need a mobile version?
Making your app mobile:

consider how and when users will access the mobile version — this will be different than how they will use your app in a browser.
Making your app mobile:

keep it simple — create a single mobile URL and use CSS to tailor the design of the mobile version to specific devices.
iPhone-specific media attribute:

```html
<link media="only screen and (max-device-width:480px)"
href="stylesheets/iphone.css"
type="text/css" rel="stylesheet" />
```
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Nissan 350z (Enter Data)

- Current Status
  - Miles: 56730
  - Average MPG: 19.7

- Projections for 1 year from now
  - Miles: 66420
  - Total Fuel Cost: $1507.65

History

- November 1st, 2007
  - Miles: 56730
  - MPG: N/A
  - G: 14.86
  - Price: $3.059

- October 21st, 2007
  - Miles: 56730
  - MPG: N/A
  - G: 14.86
  - Price: $3.059

List My Vehicles Logout

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Looking to the future:

Microformats (http://microformats.org/)
OAuth (http://oauth.net/)
OpenID (http://openid.net/)
Opera Dev Community (http://dev.opera.com/)
Mobile Safari Dev Center (http://developer.apple.com/iphone/devcenter/)
Social Graph API (http://code.google.com/apis/socialgraph/)
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Invisible High Five

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