

June 2008 Newsletter

If you are receiving this message, it means that I have done work for you in the past, I am doing work for you now, or you have expressed interest regarding me doing work for you in the future. If you would prefer to not receive further emails, please let me know about it.

Being that it is now June, I have sent out invoices to any of you for whom I have done work in May, or for those who have not yet paid for previous months. Please remit your payment when you have a chance.

Browser Wars – It seems that every month there is some issue making my life (and numerous other web designers I am sure...) difficult when it comes to satisfying both the Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE) and Mozilla Firefox browsers. The latest feature I have had to deal with is popup pages and the way each browser either allows or blocks them. I will discuss this more in detail later, but I am talking in general here and I am not going to lie and say I am unbiased because I am not. Call me old-fashioned but I am still on the side of Microsoft, even though they recently threw me a curve (more about *that* later too...). I think Firefox has an unfair advantage because they are newer. As a result, they can take what Microsoft has developed over a long period of time, make slight “tweaks” and then claim that they do basically the same thing but better. Since Mozilla now has the “buzz”, it appears they are improving on what IE does. I am not so sure about this. Regardless, IE still is the major browser with currently 89% of the U.S. market, while Firefox is at 7%. Given those numbers, who would *you* want to direct more of your time and effort on?

Google Toolbar – Many people use the free toolbar provided by Google. If you do, you might notice that some fields on forms have a pale yellow background. This has to do with the Google Toolbar’s “auto-fill” feature, which allows you to set up certain fields, such as name, address, etc. and have your PC automatically fill in these fields. It is a nice feature, but it may confuse some people as to why certain form fields have white backgrounds and some have yellow. You can turn it off by clicking the “Settings” button on the Google toolbar, selecting “Options” and un-checking the “Autofill” box.

Popovers – Getting back to the issue of popup windows... They are everywhere and, even though both browsers turn their popup blocker features on by default, there are times when you should allow popups, as many merchant and financial sites utilize them. IE at least displays a message telling you that it has blocked a popup and then allows you to turn off the blocking, either completely or for the individual site. Firefox just doesn’t display the popup. Marketers want you to see their popups so a new type of window, called a “popover” has been developed to get around the standard popup blocker. I guess in time the browsers will try and deal with these and, in fact, Firefox has done something with what they call “exit popups” which display when you leave a site. I have purchased a software solution that creates these popovers and there are some cool features. I will be working on a test page on my site that shows these pages. More on this to come...

New Version of IE – Microsoft has rolled out version 7 of Internet Explorer. Actually it has been out for a while, but I wanted to make sure Microsoft got all the kinks out before I installed it. When I got my new PC recently, I decided it was time since I still have IE 6 on the old PC. I have discovered a problem with a number of clients who have pages with images and are using the feature where you hover your cursor to display a larger version and then click to view the image full size on its own page. I have a “Close this window” link embedded in the page so you can close it without having to go to the title bar. It’s a small detail and it works fine in IE 6. In IE 7 however, for security reasons Microsoft now displays an alert message asking you to confirm that you really want to close the page. Not a big deal, but it is another window and another click. I spent some time scouring the internet and I found a workaround, but it requires a change to each page that has the link. This does not affect popup pages with the “Close this window” link, only those opened by the image hover feature. If you have IE 7 and you encounter this and you want me to change it, please let me know.

To view archives of past newsletters, go to <http://www.technicalwebsitedesign.com/newsletters.html>

Thank you all for your business (and potential business...)

Jim



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The business card features a header with the company name and slogan. Below this is a horizontal line with three purple circles on the left. To the right of the circles is the name 'Jim Sanfilippo'. Below the line, on the left, is a graphic of a computer monitor and a globe. To the right of the graphic is the address, phone numbers, and contact information.