

Going from Comp to Code using CSS and Dreamweaver 8


MAX

Jason Brightman
Web Director
Harris Publications




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The Backstory: Harris Publications



- Harris Publications, Inc., is one of the nation's largest special-interest publishers with over 70 different magazine titles. The company's emphasis is on newsstand and mass market.

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Biography




Jason Brightman
Web Director, Harris Publications

Jason Brightman is the Director of Web and Emerging Technologies at Harris Publications, one of the nation's largest special-interest publishers with more than 70 titles. At Harris, Jason is responsible for the strategic direction, design, and development of the online brand extensions for the lead titles, including XXL, KING, RIDES, and SLAM magazines. Over the past year, he has transformed the websites into dynamic, market-leading genre destinations. The new sites deliver targeted music and lifestyle content to pop-culture enthusiasts, while providing an optimized response rate for the advertisers. The redesigns have generated dramatic increases in both page views and unique users, resulting in a very strong ROI—especially since Jason remade the sites without an increase in development costs.


In addition to his publishing work, Jason has produced a variety of business-to-consumer sites for clients, including Verisign, Domainsbot, and the Warrior-Poets.

Prior to working with Harris Publications, Jason was with Sanpan Design, creating award-winning package design for entertainment properties including HBO's "Six Feet Under," "Carnivale" and "Rome." He has a BFA in Graphic Design from Pratt Institute in New York City.


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The Backstory: Harris Publications Urban Group





XXL	SLAM	RIDES	SCRATCH	KING
The No. 1 ABC audited hip-hop publication worldwide and the No. 1 selling ABC audited music magazine on the newsstand.	The No. 1 ABC audited basketball magazine worldwide, which recently celebrated its 10th anniversary.	The No. 1 selling urban auto enthusiast magazine on the newsstand. It is the younger generation's Car & Driver.	The No. 1 DJ/Production magazine for hip-hop beat makers worldwide.	The No. 1 ABC audited urban men's lifestyle magazine worldwide as well as the fastest growing men's magazine in the U.S.

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Overview

- The Backstory
- Going from A - B with the 4 D's
 - Do the Math
Sketches and the CSS box method
 - Design
Adobe Illustrator: type, color, and more math
 - Deconstruct
Adobe Photoshop: CSS and the art of the least
 - Dreamweaver
Easily pull it back together with CSS & Dreamweaver 8
- Demonstration
xxlmag.com and the top-down and outside-in approach to understanding the complexities of CSS layout
- Summary & Q&A




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The Backstory: Old XXL



- Static
- Derivative Content
- Updated Monthly

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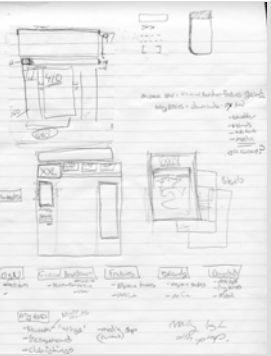
The Backstory: New XXL



- Dynamic Publishing Platform
- Exclusive Content
- Updated Daily
- Headlines
- Features
- Columnists (Blogs)
- Bangers (audio/video)
- and more

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4Ds: Do the Math




- Sketch the site working out the various sizes and dimensions

1st sketch of xolmag.com
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The Backstory: Old Sites




SLAM



RIDES

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4Ds: Do the Math




- Sketch the site working out the various sizes and dimensions
- Figuring out the dimensions early on will save lots of time later
- CSS is all about the Math...

1st sketch of xolmag.com
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The Backstory: New Sites



SLAM



RIDES

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4Ds: Do the Math: Basic CSS

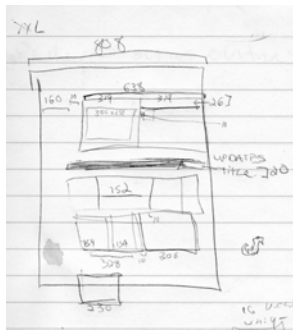
Y Height
X Width

Y Height
X Width
Z Padding

Y Height
X Width
Z Padding
Q Margin

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4Ds: Do the Math—a little planning goes a long way



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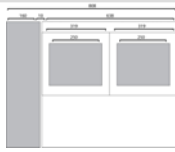
4Ds: Deconstruct—breaking the site into tiny bits



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4Ds: Design



XXL Home Page



XXL Interior Page

- Begin laying out the site in Adobe Illustrator blocking in main elements
- Continue to pay close attention to the width, height, padding and margin of elements in your design
- Layout navigation, sections, colors and graphics

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4Ds: Deconstruct: XXL



- Graphics are good for specific fonts, irregular shapes, background elements
- CSS is good for large areas of color, borders, rules, square shapes
- Never use a graphic where CSS can be used instead

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4Ds: Design—details matter



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4Ds: Deconstruct: XXL Component Graphics



- Graphics are good for specific fonts, irregular shapes, background elements
- CSS is good for large areas of color, borders, rules, square shapes
- Never use a graphic where CSS can be used instead
- Break the entire site down into the fewest number of graphics at the smallest file size possible

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4Ds: Dreamweaver

Math + Components =

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Top-down and outside-in approach

- CSS is easy in small bits so logically break the site down into it's smaller components

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4Ds: Dreamweaver 8 & CSS

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Have a plan

- CSS is easy in small bits so logically break the site down into it's smaller components
- Work from the outside in

Working from the outside of the site, the CSS for the XXL home page looks like this:

- 1.<body>
2. wrapper
3. header
4. siteBody
5. footer

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Where do you start?

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XXL header section

- 1.<body>
2. wrapper
3. header
4. siteBody
5. footer

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XXL header section

Annotations: topLeaderboard, subscribeNav, searchXXL, siteNav

1. <body>
2. wrapper
3. header
 - topLeaderboard
 - subscribeNav
 - searchXXL
 - siteNav
4. siteBody
5. footer

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Results: XXL MAG.com

Sections: Features, Columnists, Eye Candy, Headlines, The Stash (contests), XXL Magazine, Bangers (music), Reviews, Community

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XXL siteBody section

Annotations: leftColumn, features, updates, HinesWrapper, siteBody

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Largest gain of any site in it's genre.*

Site Traffic: Impressions

Month	Impressions
March	~400,000
April	~500,000
May	~600,000
June	~650,000
July	~800,000
August	~900,000

Site Traffic: Unique Visitors

Month	Unique Visitors
March	~30,000
April	~35,000
May	~45,000
June	~48,000
July	~60,000
August	~70,000

- More User Interaction
- Higher Page Views
- Increased Ad Revenue
- Same Web Staff

*Adobe.com traffic rankings as of June 28, 2008

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Top-down and outside-in approach

Annotations: .siteBar, .updates2Top, .bits, .updates2, .updates3Top, .bits, .squareAd, .affiliates

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Summary

Do the Math

- CSS is all about the Math
- Sketch the site working out the various sizes and dimensions simplifies creating CSS

Design

- Layout navigation, sections, colors and graphics in Illustrator
- Continue to pay close attention to the width, height, padding and margin of elements in your design

Deconstruct

- Break the entire site down into the fewest number of graphics with Photoshop
- Never use a graphic where CSS can be used instead

DW 8 & CSS

- CSS is easy in small bits so logically break the site down into it's smaller components
- Work from the top down and outside in

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