

REDESIGN OF INTERACTIVE BRAND COMPONENTS FOR
FRONT PORCH: ONLINE JOURNAL OF THE MFA IN CREATIVE WRITING
PROGRAM AT TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY-SAN MARCOS

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REDESIGN OF INTERACTIVE BRAND COMPONENTS FOR
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, especially my parents, Deepak and Surina, who support me every single day, give me strength, and inspire me more than anyone can imagine. Thank you to Dee and Ryan for all their support and protection.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The *Front Porch Journal (FPJ)* launched in 2006 as an online literary journal run by the students of the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) program of Creative Writing at Texas State University-San Marcos. The journal publishes online issues three to four times per year, consisting of submitted and selected pieces in a number of creative writing genres: poetry, nonfiction, fiction, literature reviews, and interviews with writers. A new group of graduate students, selected annually from the Texas State University-San Marcos MFA in Creative Writing program, take over the various editing roles and maintain the journal. *FPJ* has a growing reputation in the online journal market, which required a website and brand to expand upon this growth. Design research, strategy, and new technology lead to a redesigned *FPJ* website and brand, to convey the journal's creative voice and its integrity in the online journal market.

FPJ is a contemporary journal with a large group of contributing writers and an audience of interested readers. The selection process of contributed works, where editors' consistently chose works resembling to the journal's voice, drive *FPJ*'s success. On their website, *FPJ* calls for work that is "innovative," "insightful," and "relevant." In addition, *FPJ* promotes writers of all experience levels through written interviews and audio or video recordings of readings and interviews.

Research, Methods, and Results (RMRe) Process

The Communication Designer (CD) and *FPJ* editors communicated within an iterative process, where the CD and the editors planned every element from concept to creation, greatly benefitting the redesign. The CD divided the process into developmental phases, each with unique goals and outcomes to stage, plan, and address all details in communication design and website technologies. There are a variety of theories addressing different processes in the design and development phase. Author of *The Elements of User Experience*, Jesse James Garrett (2003), created a design and technology diagram appropriately named “Nine Pillars of Successful Web Teams.” In his methods, Garrett divides a web team’s process into strategic and tactical phases. The strategic includes research and strategy for the site, technology, and content leading into the abstract design, while the tactical phase takes the abstract design, implements the technology and content towards a final design, and management of the site. Garrett believes the only successful web teams utilize all pillars during the process (2003b).

In her book, *Designing Brand Identity*, Alina Wheeler (2009) presents another model that divides brand identity process into five phases of research, strategy, design, implementation, and management (p. 89). Within Wheeler’s implementation process, the online brand and website process includes planning, building, defining brand, creating content, designing brand, designing technical aspects, site development, and maintenance (pp. 152–3). Wheeler’s process included creating brand touchpoints, which are “opportunities to increase awareness and build customer loyalty” (p. 3).

Finally, Givechi et al. (2006) used design company IDEO’s “human centric” method to incorporate a human touch to the methodology, including “understanding,

synthesizing, creating, and communicating” (pp. 306–7) throughout the research and design process.

Modifications for interactive design made to Garret, Wheeler, and Givocchi et al.’s methodologies, created a new methodology called the Research, Methods, and Results (RMRe) process (see *Figure 1*). The goal of using the RMRe process is to thoroughly examine *FPJ* to a strong website and brand reflective of their reputation, using parts of successful methods in the communication design discipline (CDD). The iterative process included three large phases with parallel design and technical aspects:

- 1) The Research (R) phase included a brand survey, competitive market analysis, SWOT analysis, and a brand positioning assessment of all research conducted.
- 2) The Methods (M) phase integrated concept development, technical development, and brand strategy, leading to multiple prototypes of websites.
- 3) The Results (Re) phase transitioned the final prototyped design into its deliverables: a detailed brand document, a typographic style guide, and newly implemented website using Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) code, published on an active server. Technical refinements and content creation lead to the final design implementation.

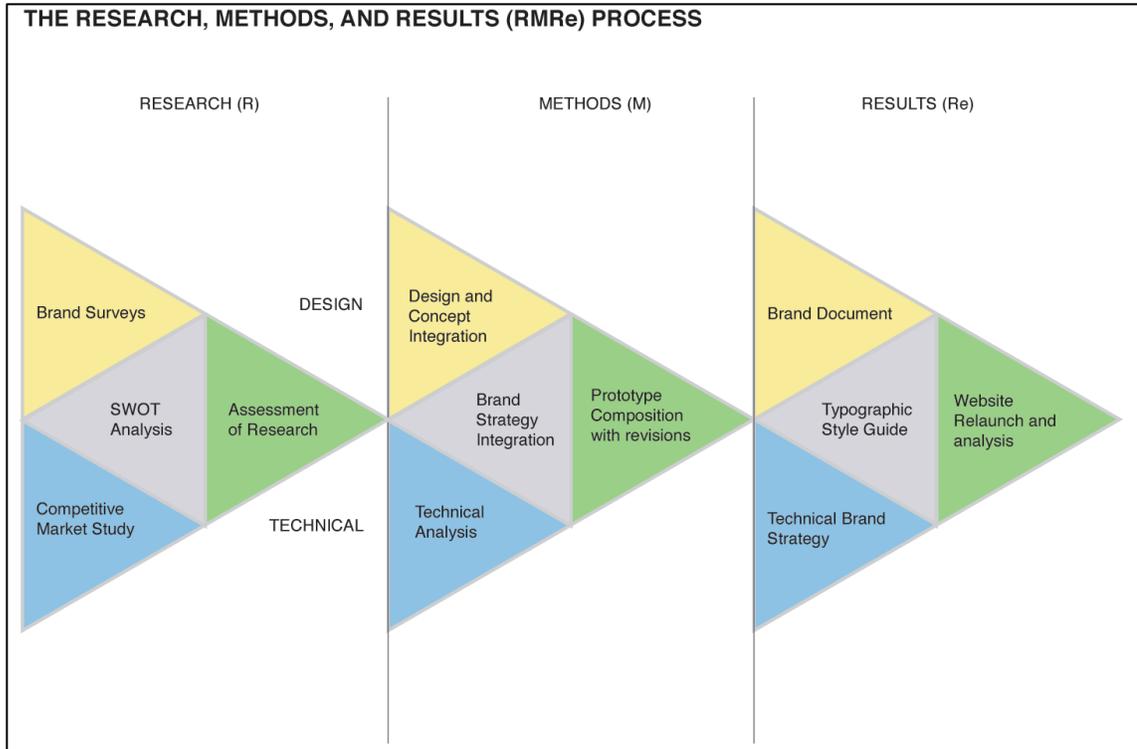


Figure 1. The Research, Methods, and Results (RMRe) process used for the *FPJ* redesign.

A majority of the research and creative data came from anonymous, phase-specific surveys given to editors and voluntary feedback from readers received through e-mail. Revision data came from two primary sources Google Analytics™ (GA) and anonymous surveys. Both data sets provided *FPJ* with information about the site visitors, including the location of their audience and technology used to access the site. This data framed the RMRe process, addressing various stages of the redesign, starting with the Research phase.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH

The assessment of *FPJ*'s current site, strategy, future plans, and place in the online journal market defined the journal's competitive position and facilitated improvements to the brand. In the Research phase of the RMRe process, the CD conducted an extensive brand audit, a series of strategic exercises to define the positioning and brand values of *FPJ*. Understanding of the organizational culture of *FPJ* directed the initial design development. Initially, the CD conducted surveys about brand with the editors. The e-mailed surveys included questions regarding the editors and CD's review of the *FPJ* brand and created the goals for the redesign. Secondly, after analyzing the brand's competitors, the CD compared them against the *FPJ*'s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). This research lead to defined a brand positioning.

Brand Survey

The first step of the process is the brand survey. The CD studied the brand and collected imagery, sketches, and ideas to brainstorm redesign concepts. In preparation for the site redesign, an *FPJ* representative conducted an internal review with the editors to determine the goals and issues to be addressed by the website redesign. The survey showed a need to move in a direction that reflected the brand and the type of work *FPJ*

publishes. The CD used these data to formulate specific questions to establish initial brand strategies. Asking *FPJ* editors strategic brand and operation questions based on CDD best practices steered the redesign in a well-communicated, iterative process.

Research questions developed for the *FPJ* rebrand and website redesign are:

- 1) Who is *FPJ*?
- 2) Who needs to know?
- 3) How will they know?
- 4) Why should they care?
- 5) What are the goals and challenges for the redesign?
- 6) What journals are in the competitive market?

(Neumeier, 2006, p. 31).

The initial review revealed a need for a “clean, crisp, and professional” (Singh, personal correspondence, June 11, 2010) website with eye-catching elements that engage a viewer without relying too heavily on being ‘tricky’ or gimmicky (Singh, 2010).

Additionally, the CD conducted a thorough editor and reader survey for keywords related to the journal, which included words such as “charming,” “current,” and “stylistically integrated” in the list. The *FPJ* editors answered the research questions through internal surveys and provided the CD with a list of competing journals for in-depth analysis.

Competitive Market Analysis

Analysis of competitive pricing and products is a common practice for corporations and organizations. Conducting a competitive market analysis was imperative for *FPJ* rebranding process and Research phase. Before beginning the redesign process, the CD

conducted a competing market study which examined the most relevant operations and website designs in order to differentiate *FPJ* in two markets. One competitive market includes other online journal websites. The CD and editors chose literary websites that had designs based on strengths or brand elements that visually interested them, and narrowed down lists to four strong competitors for analysis, based on their content and current design. The four competitive journals were *Pank*, *Bat City Review*, *Yale Review*, and *Ruminate*. The editors and CD compiled and analyzed successes and missteps in design and communication of each site, including content, site usability, and use of online branding (Illustration, pp.42–6).

Another competitive market that greatly affects *FPJ* is a collection of websites and brands from other businesses with “front porch” in their name. The CD used search engines to find institutions named “Front Porch” and analyzing both their design and coding, and found *FPJ* was listed eighth in the search results. The other seven Front Porches included multiple restaurants and blogs, of which almost half used a rocking chair silhouetted logo, similar to *FPJ*'s old brand (Illustration, pp. 47–50). With the competitive market study, the team gained insight on reader and writer interaction with each journal, how to implement effective design and gleaned from them crucial information for the remaining steps of the Research phase. This data was then included in the next step, the SWOT analysis.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is the self-study of an organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The SWOT analysis for *FPJ* (Illustration, p. 51) revealed

detailed information to assess *FPJ*'s current online presence. Completing the SWOT analysis, the editors and CD aimed to “leverage strengths, eliminate weakness, exploit opportunities, and deflect threats” (Boar, 2001, p. 194) in the redesign of the website and brand. The SWOT analysis confirmed *FPJ*'s strong presence and reputation among other journals, while defining areas to improve, such as reassessing presentation of audio and video media, creating opportunities in communicating with their audience, and understanding how other journals use technology to gauge the brand and user experience. This initial Research phase framed the rest of the RMRe process, adhering to CD practices.

Brand Positioning and Hypothesis

The research showed a brand identity and web presence ineffective in representing *FPJ*'s reputation for contemporary, well-written work. The website design was the antithesis of the reputation, displaying subdued colors, black and white photography, and inconsistent branding, rather than a strong, clear, and current voice (Illustration, pp. 35–37).

FPJ's main challenge is to bridge the disconnect between their name, representing something old and nostalgic, and a voice that is “contemporary and relevant” (Singh, 2010). *FPJ*'s updated brand must strike a balance between the old and new in a medium that provides the ability to reach a large audience and stand at the forefront of successful online journals. The Methods phase of the RMRe explored website and brand redesign based on the data collected during the Research phase and established CD practices and theories.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Design and Concept Integration

The Creative Writing program behind *FPJ* also runs the historical site, the Katherine Anne Porter (KAP) House in Kyle, Texas. Porter (1890–1980) was a Pulitzer prize-winning writer and Texas native (Katherine Ann Porter Society, 2011). The late writer's childhood home is an extension and symbol of the department, binding together Porter's historical life and the creativity flourishing from the MFA in Creative Writing program.

The concept behind the *FPJ* redesign already existed in the KAP house's backyard.

Literature and the architecture of the KAP house share common characteristics: structure, value, and history. This common ground became the foundation of the *FPJ* website and brand redesign. The CD created a photographic documentation showing images, colors, and text inspired by the concept. The purpose of the mood board is to show visual elements that represent the brand and direct the design of the *FPJ* website and brand identity. The following steps included explorations in brand and brand identity, color, imagery, typography, and layout to implement the concept.

Brand and brand identity. A Brand is the relationship between an organization's mission and services with its audience. Brand strategist and author Marty Neumeier defined branding as the reputation a company has earned, not its logos, imagery, or visual

elements (2006, pp. 1–3). Karin Hibma, strategic partner at Cronan, defined brand as the “provocative and trustworthy relationship” (Creative Summit 25 lecture on March 26, 2011) between a brand and its audience. Hibma also recommended building a brand out of “who [the company] is and what [they] want to be” (2011). The CD created the identity to represent the brand, once the brand was established. The brand identity (BI) of an organization is the “name or visual symbol that communicate a market position” or reputation (Neumeier, 2006, p. 87). These visual representations are symbolized by words, images, or a combination of the two.

FPJ’s existing BI did not reflect its inviting, yet contemporary voice. As revealed in earlier surveys, *FPJ* required a new BI because the former BI showed a confined, aged rocking chair between distressed words “FRONT” and “PORCH” (See Illustration, p. 54). The CD researched semiotics, the study of symbols, identifying symbols and iconography related to front porches, including swings, beer bottles, a side table, plants, doorbells, and welcome mats.

Studying these symbols contributed in the creation of a unique BI. The ultimate goal of the redesign is for the audience must see the journal’s contemporary reputation through a recognizable BI. Wheeler presented the “Sequence of Cognition” as the order in which a viewer recognizes a brand identity: first by shape, then color, and finally content or typography (2009, p. 52). The BI research and development included the “Sequence of Cognition,” leading to the exploration of symbols, which reflected the ideas most related to *FPJ*’s brand. Two symbols stood out—doorbells and welcome mats—because they both serve a practical function and have unique shapes. Doorbells require human interaction—pressing down on a button—which is similar to clicking links on a

website. Welcome mats are inviting to a visitor and traditionally have a kind phrase or image, such as flowers or animals, and/or wording such as “Home Sweet Home” or “Welcome.” Hibma treats brands as living organisms assigning them their own personality in her brand process (2011). Neumeier suggested that brands are “built with experiences...the key is to craft those experiences so they create delight for the people who determine the meaning and value of [the] brand” (2007, p. 97). Using these symbols as brand associations, created an experience and personality recalling them as a “mental shortcut to the brand promise” (LePla & Parker, 2002, p. 91). In the new BI, a rectangle forms negative space with the journal name positioned inside it, which extended past the edge of the rectangle—a geometric abstraction of a welcome mat. The journal name was stacked at an angle to reflect porch steps extend the concept (Illustration, p. 76).

The new BI was a central element on the website and applied to brand touchpoints. Brand touchpoints are extensions of the main brand communication (i.e. the website), exploring the use of the BI or brand in secondary mediums to promote the brand or its experience (Wheeler, 2006, p. 10). Secondary mediums include promotional items and online extensions that show the BI. A consistent use of the BI in multiple mediums strengthens the brand, making it recognizable.

Typography. Typefaces for both the brand and literary works were chosen based on ideas of legibility, authority, and formality; all important elements of the *FPJ* brand. The previous *FPJ* website used three typefaces: an unclassified, distressed typeface for the BI, and Helvetica and Georgia for the content. The distressed typeface would not be included in the redesign as it aged and distressed the journal’s name and was not appropriate for their contemporary reputation. Helvetica is a sans serif typeface designed

by Max Miedinger and Eduard Hoffmann. Helvetica is a European, ubiquitous typeface that does not convey the all-American idea of front porches, like Georgia, due to its neutral form. Georgia is a transitional serif typeface created by Matthew Carter in 1996 for Microsoft, made specifically for on screen viewing.

Georgia is a native font installed on most computers, designed exclusively for onscreen legibility, allowing a readable typographic style for site visitors. Using a serif typeface, like Georgia, for body copy appears formal, usually associated with literature and writing styles such as American Psychological Association (APA) which recommend the typeface classification because of the serif details in letterforms. Furthermore, the typeface existed in the former design, allowing for a smoother transition from old to new design. For these reasons, Georgia was the only typeface retained in the redesign.

The CD researched typeface classifications for the BI that strongly represented the brand. The CD revisited the word list of associations of front porches and found that support columns are typical front porch elements, and most structurally related to typeface design. Columns were a staple in Southern antebellum architecture, which included the revival of Greek architectural elements. Columns used in plantation-style homes classify as Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian. The variations exist in ornamentation, proportion, and the transition from the top to the bottom slabs of a column (Films Media Group, 2000). The architecture of a column, specifically the Doric order, shared similarities to one typographic classification: Egyptian or slab serifs. Slab serifs have the same details in letterform as serifs, but typically have linear, not rounded details (see *Figure 2*). With this similarity in mind, the CD selected a typeface from the slab serif classification, avoiding typefaces considered “Western,” rather concentrating on

contemporary or timeless slab serifs. The typeface selected was Memphis, a geometric slab typeface designed by Rudolf Wolf in 1929 for Stempel Foundry (now Linotype Corporation). The Linotype website described Memphis as suitable for, “technical fields, making a rational, purposeful impression... Memphis is appropriate for any text which should exhibit a clear, neutral character” (2011). The typeface connected the new BI with photographic backgrounds on the redesigned site. To maintain consistency through the content, the CD created a typographic style guide, who unified all pieces accepted into the journal (Appendix A). The guide’s collection of typographic standards supported the brand, defined style for each type level (i.e. headers, authors, body copy), created consistency, and unified all genres to *FPJ*’s voice.

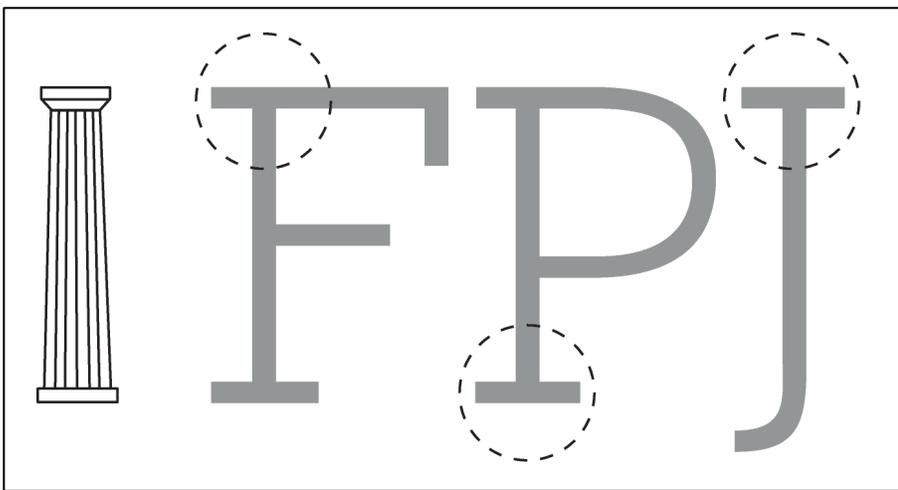


Figure 2. Memphis letterforms compared to the Doric column.

Imagery. In contrast to the old website, imagery (specifically photography) is a key component in the creation and development of the new *FPJ* site. Photography frames the content as the site background, creating an architectural space in which the written works dwell. LePla and Parker (2002) believe “backgrounds add richness to the customer

experience, while allowing for more flexibility in the creative process” (p. 236). All photography, staged in various areas around the Katherine Anne Porter (KAP) house, reflected the editors’ memories of being on porches. The editors’ personal stories (existing content on the site) became the assigned background images of each section or genre of the website. Additionally, it differentiated *FPJ* from other journals since the imagery showed editors’ stories at a unique location owned by the Creating Writing department. This concept—visual storytelling—created a more human feel for the journal and cemented the brand. Wheeler states that a CD must “understand the power of symbols and storytelling to build [the] culture and brand” (2009, p. 32). The redesign increased brand value through photographic imagery, which transformed *FPJ* into a dynamic space with photography creating blossoming life and creativity.

According to Lidwell et al. (2003), the art of storytelling has six fundamental elements: setting, characters, plot, invisibility, mood, and movement (p. 230). On the new *FPJ* site, the use of people in the photography was minimal, so the visitors became the characters of each scene. Only hints of human interaction with the porch are left behind. Books, cigarettes, summer lemonade, empty beer bottles, shoes, and musical instruments, create a vignette of the story. Lidwell et al. (2003) state that when a viewer becomes “engaged in a good movie or book, the existence of the medium is forgotten” (p. 203), allowing the storyteller—*FPJ*— to disappear. Online mediums already face the challenge of connecting the on-screen content with audiences. *FPJ*’s unique photographic backgrounds surrounding written content, create a scene allowing the visitor to get lost in the moment. The warm, summery, and inviting photography set the mood, while the photographic vignettes change with each section, directing the movement of the story

(Illustration, p. 64).

Color. The existing brand identity color palette was black and grey, set on a burgundy and white website, which did not represent *FPJ*'s contemporary voice. Color has the power to link to a brand (Wheeler, 2009 p. 52). The CD looked for unique colors not used by competing journals to represent the new brand. The former BI hindered the journal's reputation and antiquated the brand, because of the use of subdued, disconnected colors. Using site photography, the CD chose saturated colors for the new identity and website to contrast the light tones found in the site photography, specifically the exterior paint of the KAP house, a pale sea foam green with pastel yellow trim. This successfully narrowed the possibilities of the color palette down to shades of yellows, reds, grays, and blues.

Color serves both aesthetic and functional purpose in the *FPJ* redesign. The colors chosen are a bright yellow and saturated red, loosely related to Texas State University-San Marcos' color palette, gold and maroon. To extend the airy and light nature of the site, a medium-dark grey replaced black content to complement the rest of the site design and elements. The colors worked as wayfinding directors within the website (Garrett, 2003), creating hierarchy and leading the viewer from one area to another. The bright yellow identity draws full attention to itself, paired with a matching navigation to create visual hierarchy so that the user is lead throughout the page. The secondary color, the saturated red, colors interactive and clickable elements such as links, when rolled over with a mouse. The yellow BI is slightly transparent on the page, creating a layered interaction with the background image. This reflects the editors' wish to see a more "stylistically integrated" site (Singh, 2010), while providing a strong contrast to other

page elements.

Layout. The layout of the *FPJ* design responded to the problems expressed in the surveys and the new brand concept. The layout needed to utilize the architectural space made by the background and still highlight the content on the site. The new website design separates the navigation from the content, addressing the lack of visual hierarchy in the old design. The different elements of the old website are not integrated. The new design uses the previously stated color strategy and semi-transparent elements so more sections of the site come together. Former design director of *The New York Times*, Khoi Vinh states, “a grid should focus on problem solving first and aesthetics second... The simpler the grid, the more effective it is” (p. 35).

The CD explored various layouts based on dynamic and integrated concepts, specifically centered or left-aligned design with technical aspects and user experience in mind. The process started with loose pencil sketches towards wireframes, digital sketches of sections of where navigation and content are in the layout of a page (Web Style Guide, 2011), without the use of designed elements. Next, the CD created multiple layout compositions incorporating the BI, color, type and other designed elements. Through an iterative process, the *FPJ* editors critiqued the digital compositions. Once the editors chose the final layout, the CD began to code the layout into a functioning website (Illustration, pp. 66–72).

Technical Analysis

To ensure a successful transition from concept to functional site, the CD addressed the design and website design coding. Furthermore, the CD created *FPJ*'s brand and

operational strategies based on industry standard practices and assessing technology that extended *FPJ*'s offerings to the audience. The use of new website design tools and languages on the Internet assisted in creating new brand touchpoints and services for the journal, such as a two-way conversation between the *FPJ* and the audience, a new media editor position, and new content and features, such as blogs. The Technical analysis and process of the *FPJ* redesign included: the navigation, coding languages, media hosting options such as Vimeo, testing and usability, and coded prototypes.

Navigation. The website navigation determines the structure of pages and links, which lead visitors to specific sections of the website, based on the website's content. Creating successful navigation is similar to a table of contents or index common in literature; both require understanding how a visitor would intuitively move throughout a document and/or site and are easily accessible. CDs use a process to create a successful organization of links, known as site maps. A site map is a hierarchal graphic or list outlining the various sections of a site and its main content. Building two graphics, one of the old navigation and one of the redesigned navigation are created to visually reassess the organization of the site. The revised site map included additional sections such as blogs or reorganizing or removing sections such as media, based on conclusions of the SWOT analysis.

The information hierarchy guides a visitor navigates through a website. Web usability author, Steve Krug, states, "the more important something is, the more prominent it is" (2006, p. 33). The navigation of a website should be accessible and clear. Garrett stated, "communicate the relationship between the elements it contains" (2003, p. 125). *FPJ*'s old website listed all links in one general grouping that did not highlight

specific features of each link or its relationship to other links. Using Garrett's theory, *FPJ*'s new website navigation combined works into four groups:

- 1) Genres with literature submitted by writers, such as fiction, poetry, and nonfiction.
- 2) Genres with writing or media reviewed or recorded by *FPJ* editors.
- 3) A single submission link to isolate and highlight where writers can submit literature.
- 4) A group with more information regarding *FPJ* such as about, blog, archives, and links.

The old website navigation, placed above the body copy, competed with the section headers and did not create clear hierarchy. To address this, the redesigned navigation lies on left side of the page, away from the main content section and is fixed in place if a user scrolls down on pages with larger content, making it always accessible.

Additionally, to maintain visual hierarchy, each section of the website contains a unique background image to help metaphorically label each section. The opaque bar across the header of the website also labels each section and can bring users back to that menu as an isolated link. Web design languages such as HTML and CSS facilitated the creation of the navigation through the physical and metaphoric space of the website.

HTML and CSS. Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) was the coding language used to create content and structure on websites. "With HTML, authors describe the structure of pages using markup. The elements of the language label pieces of content such as 'paragraph,' 'list,' 'table,' and so on" (World Wide Web Consortium, 2011).

Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) are pages of code that style the structure, content, and each

element of the HTML page. CSS assigns visual attributes in its styling, such as borders, color, background images, transparencies, controlling scrolling, creating lists, defining text styles, and governing each element's position on the screen. Further, CSS allowed for one style definition and template to work on multiple HTML pages, which accommodated *FPJ*'s the high number of new and archived pages, continuing the brand consistency.

Vimeo. One of *FPJ*'s SWOT weaknesses was how its existing media, such as video, was presented on the *FPJ* website. The university originally hosted videos of writers speaking at the KAP house on its own servers, which restrained videos to a small size and limited download speeds. An abundance of free or low cost websites currently offer video hosting, which included high quality video, as well as other features that the university servers could not include, such as video forwarding links, full screen viewing, and labeling videos.

The CD and *FPJ* editors decided to use Vimeo, a smaller service where “respectful” and “creative” videos can be uploaded without the distraction of other non-related videos or promotional advertising banners, frequently found in other video hosting services. Vimeo removes advertising that other video hosting services and websites, like YouTube, use, making it a distinctive tool in the online branding market (Vimeo Guidelines, 2011). Vimeo is suitable for *FPJ*'s new brand and technical strategy for the following reasons:

- 1) Videos can directly be embedded into any page while preferences can be changed to stop others from embedding it as their own content.
- 2) Videos can be tagged in different categories such as “writing,” “reading,” and

“creative,” making it easier for potential of new readers and writers whom would search for those terms.

- 3) Each account is given a member page, increasing the ways the general public can discover or access *FPJ*.
- 4) All videos have customization options such as full screen viewing or auto play.
- 5) Content is easy to upload by the *FPJ* editors through Vimeo, without going through the restrictive university-based server process.

Individually moving older videos from the university’s server to Vimeo is the only drawback of using the service to host videos. In order to take advantages of the benefits Vimeo provides, *FPJ* created a new position, the Audio/Video Editor, allowing an additional graduate student in the program to be involved with the sole responsibility of creating and posting new videos.

ASP. Active Server Pages (ASP) is a language that coded server-based HTML and CSS coded pages. The main benefit of ASP is the ability to use of a line of code on each page, called “includes”, that pulls information from separate pages into specific sections of each content page. This makes it easier to update sections of the website, editing the separate content only once, rather than on every page that includes it. The old *FPJ* website utilized ASP, but only for the BI and navigation. The new *FPJ* site, loads the BI, navigation, editor masthead, and footer on all pages. This streamlined the Web Manager’s role when updating information for each issue or specifically, when *FPJ* appoints new editors and switches out their names in the masthead.

PHP and Content Management Systems. WordPress, an online blogging software, was initially slated to power the entire *FPJ* website, because it enabled *FPJ*

editors to make changes to the content without affecting or accessing the design of a page. WordPress runs on the Hypertext Pre-Processor, or PHP language (The PHP Group, 2011), and incorporates both HTML and CSS. PHP bears a resemblance to ASP in terms of functionality, but is an open-source, free language, able to run on the same servers as ASP and is used by many corporations such as Yahoo (Zeldman, p. 96). While PHP and ASP are comparable, the main reason to use PHP is its use in WordPress. WordPress, a Content Management System (CMS), separates design and coding from content, potentially making it easier for all editors to update the site, instead of the Web Managing editor. The editors create content with the use of only basic text and image editing capabilities that will not affect the HTML, CSS, or PHP code of a page. WordPress is used for blogging or creating a fully functional corporate website.

Testing and usability. In the initial Design phase, the CD built two test *FPJ* websites—one using HTML/CSS/ASP and the other one within WordPress—to determine which technology provided *FPJ* with a streamlined content-updating process. Testing revealed unsuspected weaknesses in using WordPress. More tests on usability, updating and capabilities through add-on plugins, revealed that WordPress became more inefficient for each editor. While allowing more editors access to content editing, using WordPress required additional training each year for the new editors and added to the web manager's responsibilities. Allowing all editors to access the content could lead to inconsistencies of style of content, which could potentially delay the release of future issues. These reasons outweighed the benefits of having WordPress manage the content separately from the design. Keeping the Web Manager in control allows for a consistent filter of all added content. In the end, continuing usage of ASP for most of the website, as

with the old server, was the most efficient way to bring in the new CSS style sheets and restyle over the 15 archived issues.

WordPress, however, is not completely absent in the new site design. Rather than powering the entire website, WordPress powers the journal's new blog, a brand extension opportunity revealed by the SWOT analysis (Illustration, p. 51). The personalized addition to the journal allows the start of a conversation between the readers and writers who visit the *FPJ* website and communicate or comment on posts made by editors on a rotating, but regular basis.

Brand Strategy Integration

At this stage of the Methods phase, the CD implemented the opportunities listed in the SWOT analysis, into the technical analysis and design phases. The opportunities included creating the blog, presenting video in an effective way that also extends the use of the *FPJ* BI, and the multiple technical changes made to the code to help streamline usability. This bridged the gap between the visual and the coded elements of the website. These elements integrated together during the prototype with revision stage.

Prototype Compositions with Revisions

The CD created various prototypes based on layout sketches and wireframes. The revisions covered details in photography to use for each page, color usage, examining the layout, and cementing the new typographic style. The iterative process entailed two main rounds of revisions with all staff providing input in verbal or surveyed settings, with minor revision rounds with a select group of editors. This crucial step included taking all

the design details, transitioning them into a code website, and completed the Method phase.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The *Front Porch Journal* website redesign included Research, Methods, and Results for the interactive brand and website. The four results of the process are:

- 1) An extensive brand document which includes brand guidelines, strategies, typographic style, color, layout, website structure, site maps, and expansion of research and implementation past the project scope.
- 2) A Typographic style guide detailing the format of future entries combining writing guidelines and rules of typographic design, to streamline and define the *FPJ* brand. All outcomes are shown as illustrations following this thesis.
- 3) Technical Brand Strategy, including extensive testing and SEO, created so *FPJ* gains a larger online presence.
- 4) A redesigned website and brand using contemporary web technologies (HTML, CSS, ASP, PHP, and Content Management Systems) and supporting social media.

Brand Document

The brand document (see Illustration) serves the purpose of fully defining the *FPJ* redesign with documented brand standards, process, and history. Documenting both the brand and typographic standards is crucial for a journal with a yearly, rotating editorial

staff, and even more important for the life of the brand. Wheeler (2009) states that “the role of a designer is to anticipate the future before it happens” (p. 32). The *FPJ* brand document shows the process from past to present design, the present standards to abide by, and the future of the brand through future implementations.

Typographic Style Guide

The typographic style guide (Appendix A) is a document that allows section editors to adhere to one defined typographic writing style for all accepted and edited content before it is published with each issue. As with the brand document, the style guide ensures full implementation of the *FPJ* brand. This portable and accessible document is available in PDF form and made available to all present and future editors.

Technical Brand Strategy

Search engine optimization. Search Engine Optimization, or SEO, is the process of coding that helps a page or website rank higher in search engine results. According to the Web Style Guide (2011), visitor traffic controls where a website is indexed in the search engine results, but it does not affect the content on the website. Labeling the content, specifically keywords, using appropriate HTML tags, such as headers, paragraphs, links, alternative text for images, and page title tags, the higher it exists on search engine ranking (Lynch and Horton, 2011). SEO also includes coding relevant keywords into the HTML header of the page. *FPJ* used keywords related to writing terms, genres, and regions such as “writing,” “poetry,” and “Texas.” An additional step in studying what keywords are relevant and statistics on site visitors are, included the use of

Google Analytics™.

Google Analytics™. Google Analytics™ is a web and JavaScript based add-on to websites that allows the owner of the website to track who, where, when, and how someone visited their website. Google Analytics™ reveals statistical information about the visitor, all without compromising the personal identity:

- 1) How the visitor ended up on the site (direct link, referred link, or search engine).
- 2) How much time the visitor spent on the site (minutes per page).
- 3) Technical configuration of the visitors' computer (mobile, browser, and OS).
- 4) Where the visitors accessed the site from (city, state, or country).

Further, the service captures search keywords used in search engines, which generate results including the *FPJ* site. Determining which keywords result in the most traffic and rank the site higher in search results are a crucial part of the SEO and technical strategy. The new list of keywords included those terms and added terms such as “blog,” “videos,” and “readings,” expressing more of *FPJ*'s offerings. A full 3-month report from Google Analytics™ can be found in Appendix B.

In the process of designing a new site, it is important to determine what browsers and resolution visitors use, so the design is compatible with the visitors' technical settings. This information is particularly helpful when designing the visual layout of the *FPJ* website and the size of the elements on the site in pixels (Google Analytics™, 2010).

Cross-Browser Testing. Since HTML and CSS elements translate code into design differently in numerous Internet browsers, the actual style and architecture of the website can vary from the views of the designer or editors' computers. As it was not practical to

test on physical machines with a variety of browsers and resolutions, two free websites offered services that load the designed site in various predetermined browser, OS, and resolution combinations. The results project each scenario on screen or by downloadable report. The two utilities used in the *FPJ* study are BrowserShots.org and Adobe's BrowserLab (<https://browserlab.adobe.com/>). Browsershots generates downloadable images of the pages showing exactly what is viewable on different OS, even if both use the same browser. Adobe BrowserLab shows comparable details of which recent HTML or CSS attributes are compatible with different browsers.

To verify that some of the information generated displays a variety of resolutions, a third test is implemented, using Google Lab's Browser Size. The free service displays an image over the website dividing the screen based on how much the average viewer can see based on resolution, and what percent of the internet browsing population is able to see each section. These data compared similarly to editors, readers, and writers' shared screen shots and data from their personal computers, and led to improving *FPJ*'s design on multiple browsers.

Website

A fully functional website, accessible and visually appealing to readers and writers interested in creative writing is the final result of the RMRe process, using design and technical methods to create a virtual front porch on the website. The background imagery supports the content of each issue, letting it exist on the front porch of the KAP house. The website is the main form of communication with the journal's readers and reflects the concept in the new design and BI. The website is coded using HTML, CSS, ASP, and PHP, and includes new features such as a separate archive section and blog.

Launch Analysis

While the old *FPJ* site did not implement analytic software, the editors and the CD activated Google Analytics™ for the November 8, 2010 relaunch. Since the launch, the website has had over 5,337 visits from 3,797 unique visitors mostly visiting the editor's letter, submission page, and poetry section. Google Analytics™ tracked 396 visits on the launch day alone (Appendix B). Less than a week after the launch, the Huffington Post published an article about the top 15 online journals, and Huffington Post readers rated *FPJ*, the #1 online journal. The article brought 277 visits to the redesigned website, and a total of 1,260 visits in the first week. Editors have begun using the typographic style guide for the next issue of *FPJ*.

Slight adjustments in content and browser testing have been made based on voluntary feedback from the *FPJ* audience and editors to solve minor issues in browser compatibility and navigation. With the new brand and website fully functioning, the next steps include expanding upon the brand.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This research documents the redesign of the BI and website of *Front Porch Journal* (*FPJ*), the online journal of the MFA in Creative Writing program at Texas State University-San Marcos. *FPJ* faced disconnects between their nostalgic name and contemporary work. The CD studied CDD existing methods and practices to create a custom process for the redesign: the Research, Methods, and Results (RMRe) process, a method combining various CD industry standards and techniques, was used to create a website and brand identity (BI) that accurately represents *FPJ*'s growing reputation.

Using the RMRe process significantly improved the journal's authenticity in the market. The brand and website are unlike any other competitive online journal, and portray *FPJ* as a contemporary journal. The new BI integrates with the website design, creating a virtual front porch for the readers with the use of photographic backgrounds framing the text. By using photographic imagery from a program-owned location and creating a logo without the use of the silhouetted rocking chair (common in other front porch sites), the *FPJ* brand stands out from both competitive markets. This differentiation is important for *FPJ*'s redesign, making the journal authentic to the readers and building the brand through the art of storytelling. The underlying narrative in the photographs connects and builds trust with the readers, reducing the distance between the reader and the screen.

The RMRe process did not restrict the outcomes, but rather it built a foundation for the redesign that involves an iterative and transparent process between the CD and the editors. The process also allowed the CD and editors to measure project outcomes through the various phases of the RMRe. The Research phase included brand audits and SWOT analysis that provided *FPJ* editors with an assessment revealing the competitive market and what opportunities were available to the journal. The Methods phase included exploration in BI, typography, imagery, color, and layout, as well as development of technology through HTML, CSS, and SEO capabilities. The Results—the new brand document, typographic style guide, website and brand identity—provide *FPJ* with a strong and unique brand with tools to continue the journal’s growth for years to come. The creation and implementation of a brand document, writing style guide, and technical brand strategy will ensure the consistent use of the brand for the foreseeable future.

Expansion of Research

The *FPJ* website was the first step in the redesign implementation of the *FPJ* brand. The brand will continue to grow in additional phases and continue to bring more writers and readers to the journal’s website.

Tactile touchpoints would include usable or practical writing or porch related giveaways at trade shows, including notebooks, pens, t-shirts, bags, since *FPJ* editors attend conferences, trade shows, seminars and workshops for aspiring writers. Rather than create short-term promotional items, objects either related to writing or that have a long term use were presented. These objects include reusable tote bags, t-shirts, and moleskin notebooks all with the brand screen-printed onto each item.

Online extensions include the implementation of social media, e-mail newsletters (e-newsletters), and/or mobile applications. Devices such as Apple's iPhone and iPad tablet, and Google's Android have redefined the CDD role, reflecting the demand for content available in mobile form. Building a mobile application that the end user can take issues of *Front Porch* everywhere they go, would extend the brand experience *FPJ*'s new website design has, creating a virtual porch. Mobile platforms allow users to read content from the latest issues, share content with others, access media from the videos and audio archives, access the blog, download front porch images for the backgrounds of their mobile devices, and contact *FPJ* through e-mail, Twitter, or Facebook.

The success of the process in this *FPJ* redesign lies with the transparency and objectivity between the editors and the CD. However, the process must be used multiple interactive rebrand projects to measure its success. The main phases of the RMRe process will remain, as each step can be customized for the projects that implement the process. Bridging the technical and conceptual, as well as continuing an open dialogue between the CD and the client, will be crucial in the success of the process.

ILLUSTRATION

FRONT PORCH JOURNAL

Brand Document

INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH

METHODS

RESULTS

CONCLUSION

Front Porch is the online literary journal of Texas State University's MFA program. Founded in 2006 by MFA students, *Front Porch* publishes exceptional poetry, fiction, nonfiction, reviews, and interviews. The journal features a one-of-a-kind video and audio archive, which offers an assortment of celebrated authors reading and discussing their work.

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literary journal of the Texas State MFA Program

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Front Porch 15 pays homage to Ai, Barry Hannah, and Jennifer Wrisley, who have each been pronounced dead this year, too soon. It is our hope to extend their felt presence. Alongside acknowledging these losses, our summer issue also celebrates beginnings.



In a video recording of a reading she gave in 2003, Ai speaks about laying claim to one's own life when she

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About Front Porch

"... there used to be front porches. And people sat there sometimes at night, talking when they wanted to talk, rocking, and not talking when they didn't want to talk. Sometimes they just sat there and thought about things, turned things over. . . the real reason, hidden underneath, might be they didn't want people sitting like that, doing nothing, rocking, talking; that was the wrong kind of social life. People talked too much. And they had time to think. So they ran off with the porches."

—From *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury

Front Porch is the online literary journal of Texas State University's MFA program. Founded in 2006 by MFA students, Front Porch publishes exceptional poetry, fiction, nonfiction, reviews, and interviews. We're also pleased to feature a one-of-a-kind video and audio archive, which showcases celebrated authors reading and discussing their work.

At Front Porch, you will find some of the best and most renowned talents in contemporary writing published alongside promising new voices. Our editors seek out both innovative and traditional literature. In short, we're looking for insightful and relevant writing that excels, no matter its form. Visit our submissions page, join our mailing list, or do both. We would love to hear from you.



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Front Porch Links

Texas State

- [Front Porch on Facebook!](#)
- [Texas State University's MFA Program in Creative Writing](#)
- [The Katherine Anne Porter House](#)
- [New York Times article on Texas State MFA program \[pdf\]](#)

What People are Talking About

- [42opus](#)
- [Emerging Writers Network](#)
- [Moorish Girl](#)
- [Mid-American Review](#)
- [Maud Newton](#)
- [Identity Theory](#)
- [New England Review](#)
- [NPR on Front Porches](#)
- [Pindeldyboz](#)

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Submission Guidelines

Front Porch accepts fiction (short stories and novel excerpts), poetry, and creative nonfiction. Please submit only one piece of fiction and nonfiction at a time, and no more than five poems at a time as DOC. or RTF. files only. You must submit via our [online system](#).

Our response time is generally 3-4 months, but may be longer. We accept unsolicited simultaneous submissions, given that you promptly inform us upon acceptance elsewhere. We do not accept previously published material. Front Porch asks for first serial rights and the right to keep your work in our archives; all other rights revert back to the author after publication. We also ask that authors mention that their work first saw publication in Front Porch in any future reprints.

Please note: We only accept electronic submissions via our online system. Paper submissions will not be read or returned.

Book Reviews

We encourage publicists to send us catalogues and review copies of forthcoming titles. Please email bookreviews@frontporchjournal.com with any inquiries. You may send literary fiction, poetry, and nonfiction books for review consideration to:

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Other questions or comments regarding the journal can be sent to frontporchjournal@gmail.com.

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Ai

Reading at Texas State University

Please allow for up to 3 minutes to download based on your connection.



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Front Porch Interviews

Issue 15

- *Barry Hannah, Remembered*

Barry Hannah—novelist, award-winning short story writer, gun and motorcycle enthusiast—died on March 1 of this year. Hannah's inaugural collection, *Airships*, made him an icon; his gymnastic sentences established him as a kind of literary acrobat. In 2005, he was the Endowed Chair at the Texas State MFA program, a time that unfortunately coincided with his battle against cancer. Below, his students remember him as a writer, a crazy person, and a teacher.

[\[read full piece\]](#)

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INTRODUCTION

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QUESTIONS

1. Who is FPJ?
2. Who needs to know?
3. How will they find out?
4. Why should they care?
5. What are the goals and challenges for the redesign?
6. What journals are in the competitive market?

(Neumeier, 2006, p. 31).

ANSWERS

1. *Front Porch Journal (FPJ)* is the online literary journal of Texas State University-San Marcos' MFA program. Founded in 2006 by MFA students, *FPJ* publishes exceptional poetry, fiction, nonfiction, reviews, and interviews.
2. Creative and literary journals at institutions around the country (and internationally), writers whom would submit work to the journals, and readers whom enjoy contemporary literature.
3. Relaunching the website with a new design, new brand, and other brand implementations to reach out to viewers, running with new fall issue release.
4. Run by students from one of the most notable and recognized Creative Writing Programs in the nation.
5. Front Porch has an added challenge with the name of our journal representing something [old] & provincial... A challenge specific to this journal is to make sure the layout matches the associations people have with front porches, but also to make the site feel contemporary and relevant instead of nostalgic, to match the kind of content [they] are looking to publish.
6. Pank, Ruminare, Bat City Review, and Yale Review.

Singh, H. (2010). Personal Correspondence.

- » Professional
- » Clean
- » Clever
- » Detailed/Layered
- » Charming
- » Inviting/Welcoming
- » Current, yet timeless
- » Stylistically integrated

GOALS

Create a website and brand identity that is clean, crisp, and interesting without looking gimmicky. The website should be contemporary, visually appealing and easy to use, and the brand should be different than any other journal, while reflecting the journal's content.

CHALLENGES

The journal's name, *Front Porch*, represents nostalgia and novelty, different than the work that is accepted by the editors. The challenge of the redesign is to make the website and brand identity reflect the associations readers have with front porches in a contemporary style that resonates the content chosen for the site.

Understanding the present market and learning from the successes and missteps of other online journals listed in the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses (CLMP) can help *FPJ* differentiate its brand against other CLMP sites. Studying both the successes (in blue) and missteps (in maroon) of each journal's website can help *FPJ* find the right combination of successfully working elements. Competing journal websites studied included:

- » Pank
- » Bat City Review
- » Yale Review
- » Ruminare

CHANGING PHOTOGRAPHIC
HEADER

PHOTO HEADER TAKES OVER PAGE
REAL ESTATE

TRANSPARENCY
AND LAYERING



MAGAZINE

[SUBSCRIBE TO PANK]

ONLINE ISSUES

- 5.06 / June 2010
- 5.05 / May 2010

PRINT ISSUES

- PANK 4
- PANK 3

CLEAN SITE

IMAGE POWERS OVER LITERATURE,
WHICH SEEMS SMALL

LESS ADVANTAGEOUS
NAVIGATION POSITIONING

INFORMATION HIERARCHY IS NOT EFFECTIVE

RELIES HEAVILY ON TYPOGRAPHY



REPEATING SUBSCRIPTION MESSAGES THROUGHOUT THE WEBSITE

HIERARCHICAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

NOT ENGAGING AS A WHOLE. TOO MUCH WHITE SPACE. FIXED WIDTH IS INEFFECTIVE

LOGO AND WORD MARK CREATE
A STUTTER WITH REPEATING R
(HAPPENS REPEATEDLY ON SITE)

RELIES HEAVILY ON
VISUALS TO SET TONE



TEXTURES ADD VISUAL
INTEREST

IMAGE OVER POWERS
LITERATURE

UNREADABLE
ACTION BUTTONS

OTHER FRONT PORCHES

Other front porch-related websites searched on Google showed businesses such as digital companies, restaurants, neighborhood forums, and bars all with the same namesake.

The seven websites appear before *FPJ* in a Google search for “Front Porch.” These findings help navigate what to avoid in the redesign as well as providing crucial information for the SEO process.

The screenshot displays the website 'the front porch' with the following content:

- Logo:** An orange rocking chair icon next to the text 'the front porch'.
- Navigation:** Links for 'news', 'menu', 'beer list', and 'wine menu'.
- News Section:**
 - Holiday hours:** The Porch will be closed on Sunday July 4th to celebrate Independence Day. We'll open up on Monday at 5:30 for Chicken and Waffles Night as Usual.
 - Bike Delivery:** We're proud to offer delivery by Bike Messenger Wednesday, Thursday, Friday for Lunch and Dinner. Just Call us at the porch and we'll get your fave's out to you.
 - People's Choice Shrimp N Grits Cook-Off:** Congratulations to Chef Mark who won the people's choice award at the San Francisco Sunday Streets on Sunday May 23rd.
 - Memorial day crawfish boil:** Come down to the southern mission for a Louisiana style crawfish boil on Sunday, May 30th. We'll be doing the traditional bayou boil as well as bbq-ing chicken and oysters from 1 pm till the sun goes down. We'll not be open for regular dinner service, sorry, but we welcome y'all to join our party. There'll be live music and dj's and watermelon seed spittin.
- Contact Information:**
 - the southern mission
 - 65a 29th street
 - (between mission and san jose)
 - san francisco ca 94110
 - 415.695.7800
 - email the front porch
 - dinner nightly
 - 5:30pm-10:30pm
 - bar til midnight



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- Technology
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 - Integration
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 - Contact Us
 - News
 - Technical Support
 - Employment
 - Intellectual Property
 - Community

Communicate directly to your subscriber's browser at any time!

Reach **80%** in one day, reach **99%** in a week

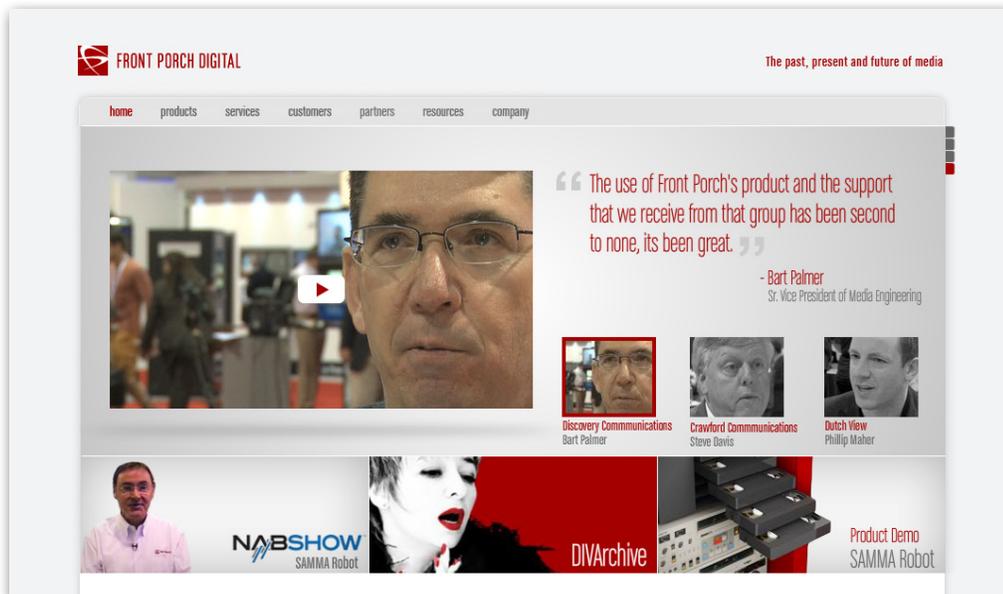
- Acquisition Communication
- Copyright Notices
- Network Alerts
- Billing Notification
- Bandwidth Usage
- Promotional Offerings
- Error Monetization

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Scalable Technology
Front Porch services millions of subscribers daily on cable, telecom, 3G and wireless networks. Our patented technology connects some of the largest IP

News
Front Porch CEO Zachary Britton in Chile during earthquake
Front Porch and Active Broadband Networks Demonstrate Integrated

Industry Thoughts
Derek Maxson
derekmaxson



FRONT PORCH DIGITAL The past, present and future of media

home products services customers partners resources company

“ The use of Front Porch's product and the support that we receive from that group has been second to none, its been great. ”

- Bart Palmer
Sr. Vice President of Media Engineering

Discovery Communications Bart Palmer
Crawford Communications Steve Davis
Dutch View Phillip Maher

NABSHOW SAMMA Robot
DIVArchive
Product Demo SAMMA Robot

FRONT PORCHES (cont'd.)

Further, 3 out of the 7 sites showed rocking chairs in their logo, and none of the 7 appear to have any trade or service-mark attached to their names.

THE FRONT PORCH  **Let Us Entertain you!**

HOME PIANO BAR DINING SPECIAL EVENTS HOURS/DIRECTIONS RESOURCES MERCHANDISE

Piano bar now open seven days a week!
 We are open for lunch upstairs every day from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM.
 We offer **The Judy Show** Thursday through Monday at 9:00 PM.
 Be sure to check back regularly!

News and Events!
 Letter from Jon "Mother" Revere. [read more...](#)
 The "Front Porch" in the old days. [take a look at this...](#)
 From Metroline News Magazine [take a peek...](#)

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Newsletter
 Why not take the time to join our mailing list! Join now and become a VIP member! No cover charges and more!
[Join now...](#)

In The Heart of Ogunquit
 9 Shore Road
 Ogunquit, Maine 03907
 (207) 646-4005
[Get Directions](#)

Dining
 Come check out what all the talk is about!
[Read more...](#)

Piano Bar and Lounge
 Live entertainment always available in our upstairs piano bar.
[Read More...](#)

The Judy Show
 Check out the web site.
[Read More...](#)

Front Porch Forum ^{beta}

Home • Take a Tour • Join • Testimonials • Press • FAQ • About Us Log In

Welcome to the Front Porch.

Use Front Porch Forum to knit your neighborhood together. Recent news...

- [Knight News Challenge 2010 winner...](#) Front Porch Forum!
- [FPF now in 38 Vermont towns!](#)
- [Bill McKibben's Yankee Magazine](#) feature article about FPF now online... [book excerpt](#) too!
- [Post a message](#) to your nearby neighbors!
- [Join your FPF neighborhood forum](#), or add your town to our wait list.
- More than 19,000 local households subscribe to FPF, including 40% of state's largest city. Thanks to our launch sponsors in [Grand Isle County](#) and [Starksboro](#), and [e-Vermont](#).
- Not receiving FPF? Can't post? See our FAQ ([Yahoo](#) and [AOL](#) users) or [contact us](#).
- [Support FPF's mission with your dollars.](#)

How Does it Work?
 Your neighborhood's forum is only open to the people who live there. It's free and requires no work from you. Simply [join](#) and receive occasional email newsletters written by neighborhood members. Contribute to your community. It's all

People Love Their Neighborhood Forum

The Front Porch

15th & Lawrence • LODO

June

FIND YOUR NAME & DRINK FOR FREE ALL NIGHT

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
FLIP NIGHT: order a drink flip a coin guess correctly and your drink is FREE! Wii Bowling Tournament with a \$30 BAR TAB Every Sunday	FLIP CUP TOURNAMENT brian brazos	1 FLIP NIGHT	2 FLIP NIGHT	3 melissa & john	4 alex & sarah	5 kimberly amanda chris
6 keenan kyle victoria wii BOWLING TOURNAMENT	7 gary & erica	8 spencer & tracy	9 FLIP NIGHT	10 jennifer milan kent	11 mike michelle ashley	12 kira paige vanessa
13 james laura wii BOWLING TOURNAMENT	14 will & kathleen	15 meredith & courtney	16 FLIP NIGHT	17 charissa & emily	18 daniel & rachel	19 nicole & justin
20 shauna steven wii BOWLING TOURNAMENT	21 happy fathers day! trevor tara	22 christie & mackenzie	23 FLIP NIGHT	24 carlie lauren brandon	25 sam & stephanie	26 kevin & elizabeth



Front Porch Republic

Place. Limits. Liberty.



HOME ABOUT WHO WE ARE CONTACT SUPPORT FPR LINKS





CLS v Martinez, Again

By Caleb Stegall
8 Comments

I am going to try something largely inadvisable and possibly impossible, which is to explain the Court's speech related First Amendment jurisprudence in accessible layman's terms. [Read the entire entry »](#)



An Homage to Chesterton

By James Matthew Wilson
One Comment

For Chesterton the birds of nature were always singing about the rightness of things and so softly correcting modern man's unnatural despair of the created order and his egregious confidence that he could create by artifice a more perfect order in deliberate violation of the old one.

Swimming with Sharks

By Mark T. Mitchell
7 Comments

Today many Americans seem smitten with the notion that Washington holds the answer to the many dangers circling in the water.

Whoring in Higher Ed

By Jason Peters
28 Comments

I'm curious. Would you sleep with me for a million bucks?

From the Porch

the FPR blog

- March of the Ciceronians**
 [7 Comments | Jeremy Beer]
 A reader asks: anyone interested in joining the Ciceronian Society, a new APSA-affiliated group?
- David Brooks's FPR Conversion**
 [5 Comments | Patrick J. Deneen]
 News Flash: Brooks criticizes suburbia.
- More on CLS vs. Martinez**
 [8 Comments | Patrick J. Deneen]
 CLS vs. Martinez is part of a long-term effort to eviscerate all fundamental human associations. Only the radical individual and global state are regarded as legitimate.
- Of Humility and Gratitude: Dana Gioia at Notre Dame**
 [One Comment | James Matthew Wilson]
 Dana Gioia's brief but worthy address at Notre Dame.
- Food: The Cornerstone of Christian Credibility**
 [3 Comments | Rachel Blum]
 This spring, Joel Salatin spoke at Patrick Henry College on "Food: The Cornerstone of Christian Credibility." I'm happy to be able to make an audio recording...

STRENGTHS

- » Organized by category
- » Colors reminiscent of TxState
- » Associated with a strong academic program
- » Brand equity (reputation of brand) ie. Program strength

WEAKNESSES

- » Website is not reflective of *FPJ* content
- » Website is not reaching a large enough audience
- » Videos are too small/pixelated
- » Archive needs reorganization
- » BI is not unique (three other businesses named “Front Porch” with silhouetted rocking chairs)

OPPORTUNITIES

- » Blogs for editors
- » New job opportunities(A/V manager)
- » New A/V Section (streamlining video uploads)
- » Create brand extension through various means:
 - » Social media
 - » Mobile apps/site
 - » Web banners
 - » Press opportunities
 - » Photo Contests for user-created imagery

THREATS

- » Saturated market of literary journals
- » Loss of personal, tactile touch

BRAND STRATEGY

- » Website and Brand Positioning
 - » Google Analytics
 - » Vimeo Channel
 - » Social Media
 - » Blog/E-Newsletters
 - » iPhone/Mobile Media
 - » Promotional Materials

WEBSITE

A fully functional website, accessible and visually appealing to readers and writers interested in creative writing that implements opportunities listed in the SWOT analysis:

- » Google Analytics
- » Vimeo Channel
- » Social Media
- » Blog/E-Newsletters
- » iPhone/Mobile Media
- » Promotional Materials

All brand communication means will be produced in addition to the website.

BRAND DOCUMENT

An extensive brand document which includes brand guidelines, strategies, typographic style, color, layout, website structure, site maps, and expansion of research and implementation past the project scope, like apparel, posters, and other marketing means. Also included will be digital files of brand elements and how to use them correctly.

TYPOGRAPHIC STYLE GUIDE

The typographic style guide is a document that is available for genre editors of *FPJ* to adhere to one defined typographic writing style for all accepted and edited content before it is published with each issue. The style guide ensures consistent implementation of the *FPJ* brand.

INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH

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Front Porch's old brand identity did not reflect its inviting yet contemporary voice. The logo has words "FRONT" and "PORCH" confining an aged rocking chair between them.

FRONT  **PORCH**

- » Rocking chairs
- » House numbers
- » Doors
- » Doorbells
- » Welcome mats
- » Ash trays
- » Books
- » Journals
- » Evening / Sunset
- » Iced Tea
- » Steps
- » Pets
- » Shoes
- » Plants
- » Cards
- » Whisky
- » Beer



Photos by Sameera Kapila and Jeff Davis

IMAGES DESCRIBING *FPJ* »

Initial digital brand identity sketches explored various parts of a front porch and its associations. Some options explore manipulating text to symbolize architectural flourishes, recalling steel or wooden house numbers or vintage doorbells. Others use light, motion, or dimension to create shadow, steps, or imply rocking.

The type variations experiment with the use of both the fluidity and formality of Georgia, with the architectural stability of Memphis.

FRONT
PORCH

front
PORCH

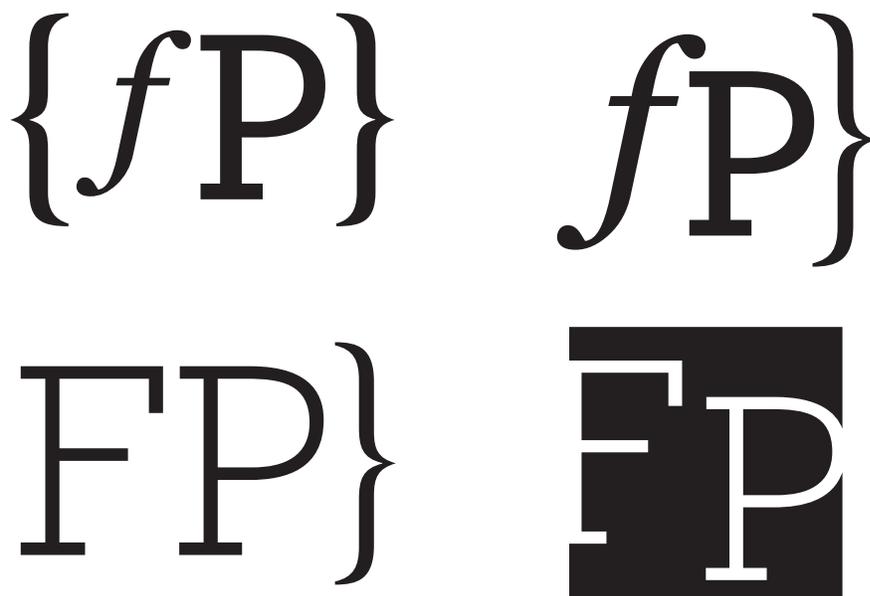
FRONT
PORCH

FRONT
PORCH

{front}
{PORCH}



Having one word and image mark and then shorter mark or logo with recognizable and familiar elements can give the brand more flexibility in application. For example, these shorter marks can be a great watermark for all videos embedded into the site. Further, a square shape for secondary brand elements is required in social media or technological implementation such as avatars and favicons, the icons that appear next to the website title in a browser.

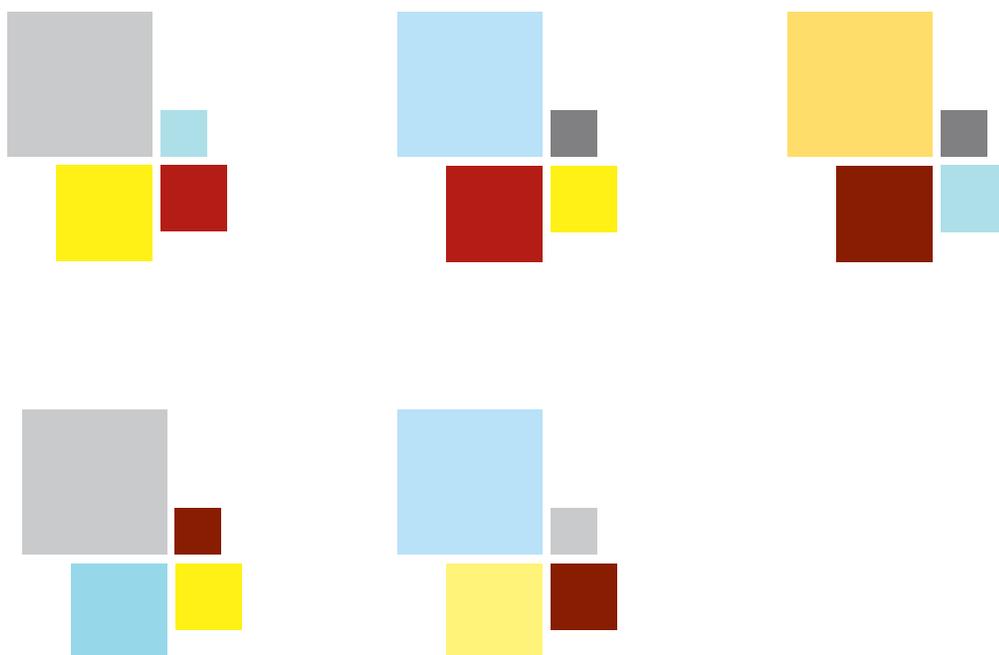


Using metallic or wooden house numbers to create issues numbers for each new issue launched.

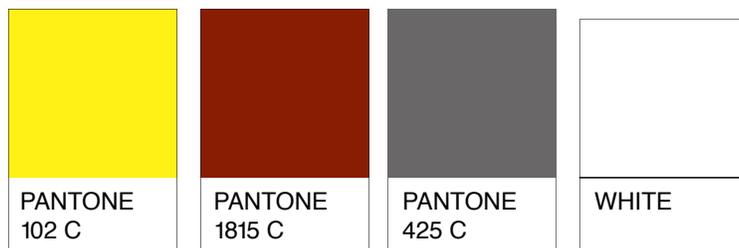
ISSUE **no.**
16

issue
no.
16

FPJ looked for fresh, creative, warm, and welcoming colors which are not easily outdated. The colors should loosely reference the garland and gold colors of Texas State University-San Marcos. The size of each square represents how much each color could be used on the page. White space should be integrated to complement any color palette and add professional value to the site and brand.



The final colors chosen are bold, contrasting the photographic backgrounds, differentiating FPJ from the competitive market, and slightly referencing Texas State University-San Marcos' color palette.



MEMPHIS, TYPEFACE USED IN BRAND IDENTITY

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

1234567890 !@#\$%^&

*()-=[\];',./`~_+{|:”<>?

BODY COPY SET IN GEORGIA

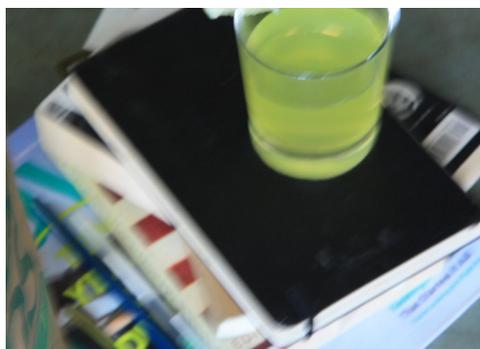
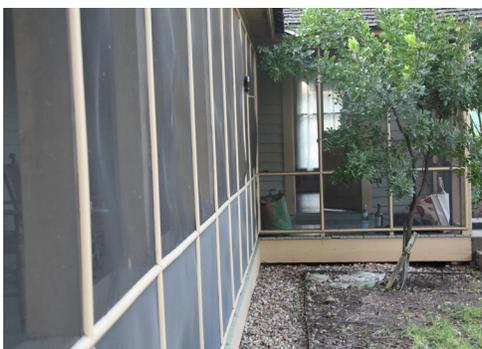
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

1234567890 !@#\$%^&

*()-=[\];',./`~_+{|:”<>?

Imagery on the website showing warm and cool tones or showing natural or architectural elements text in written pieces suggested by the CD. However, any architecture elements would be too vague and could potentially age *FPJ*'s brand. Architecture that related to the journal left on campus buildings and the historic and program-owned Katherine Anne Porter house in Kyle, Texas. Over the course of 6 months, two photography shoots, staged at the landmark, captured architectural elements that created a tableaux of metaphors for the *FPJ* brand.



BRAND IMAGERY »

A site map is a hierarchal graphic or list outlining the various sections of a site and its main content. Building two graphics, one of the old navigation and one of the redesigned navigation was created to visually reassess the organization of the site, and included adding or removing sections based on SWOT analysis. The navigation for the new website was reorganized, grouping links into different sections with the same purpose. New sections were added for the blog portion.

0

Home Page

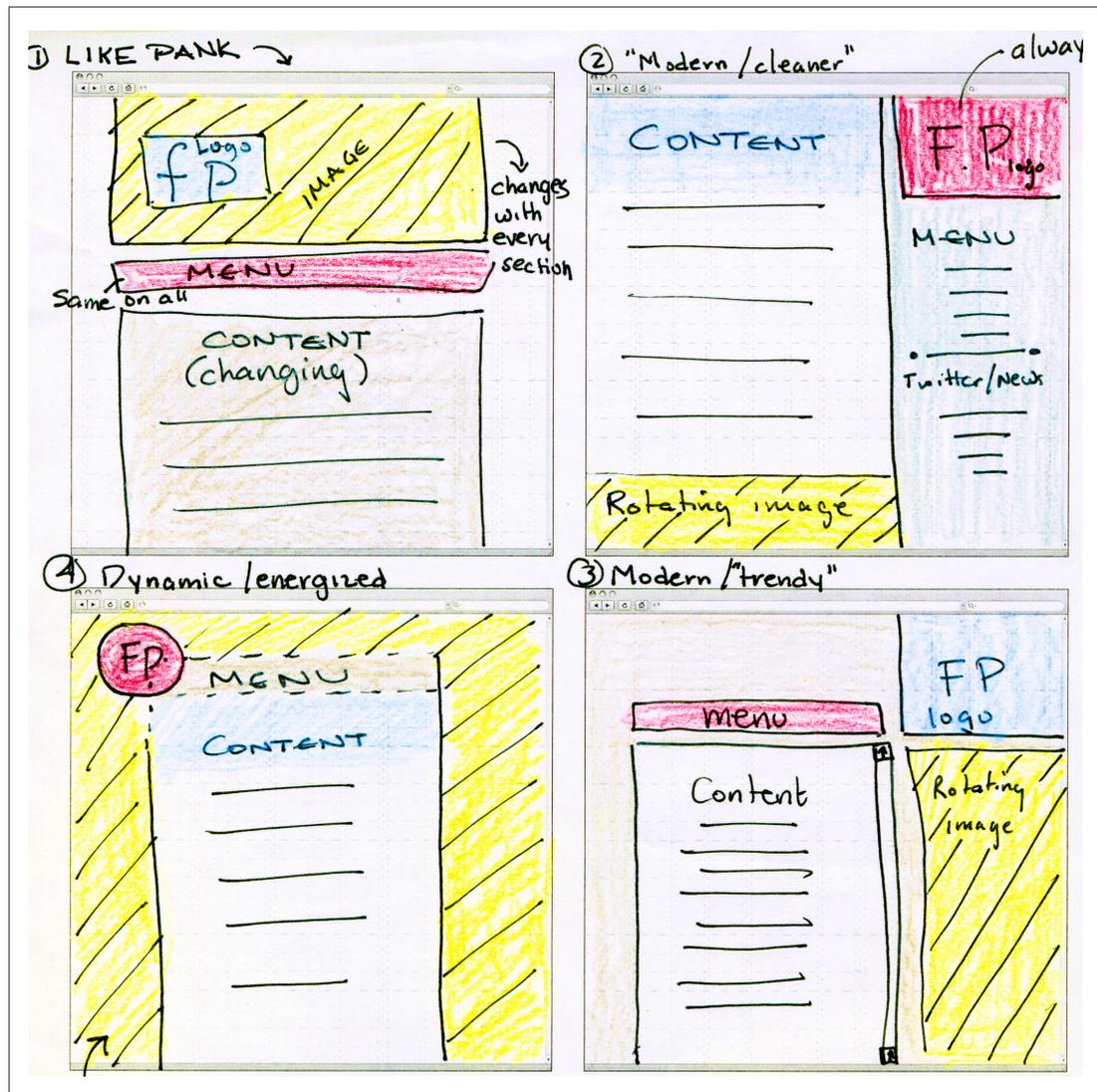
1. Fiction
2. Poetry
3. Reviews
4. Nonfiction
5. AV
6. Interviews
7. Archives
8. About
9. Submit
10. Links

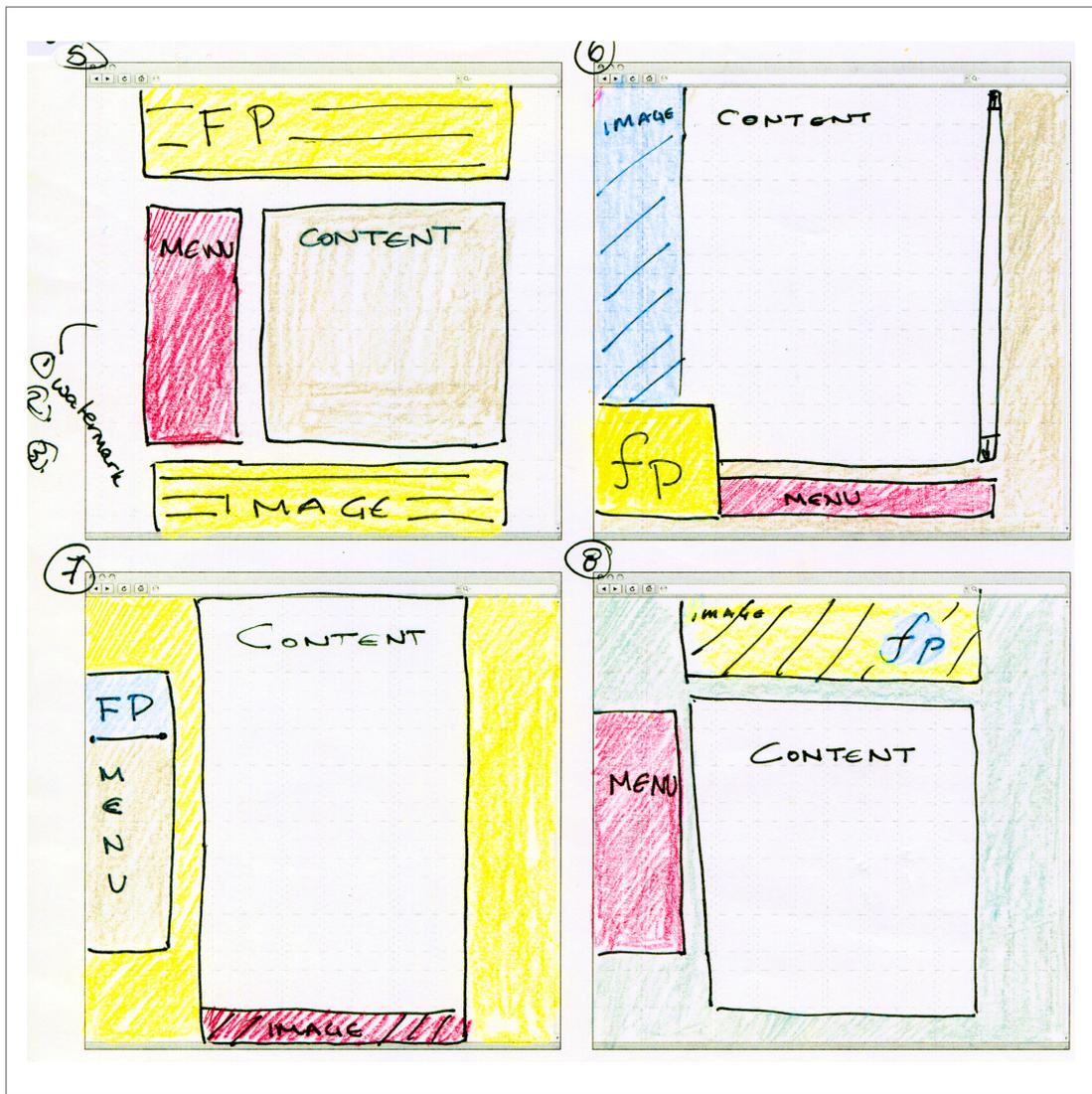
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Home Page

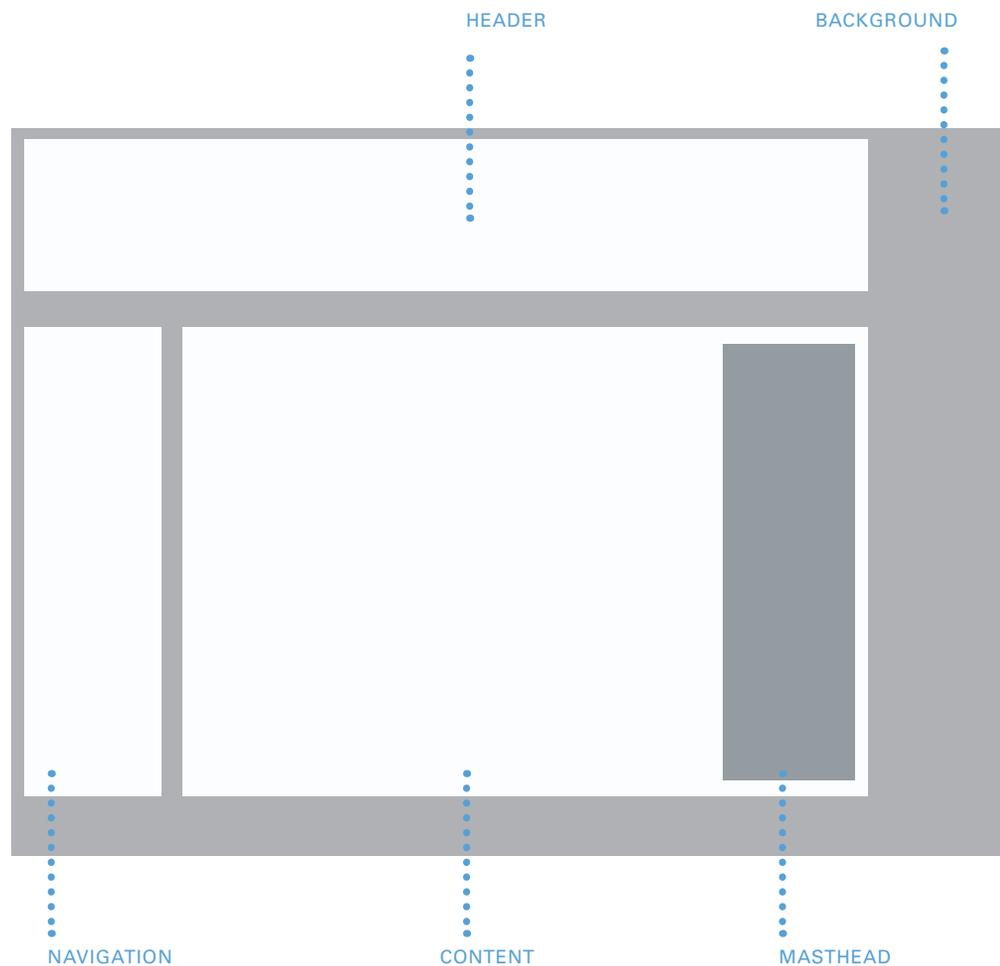
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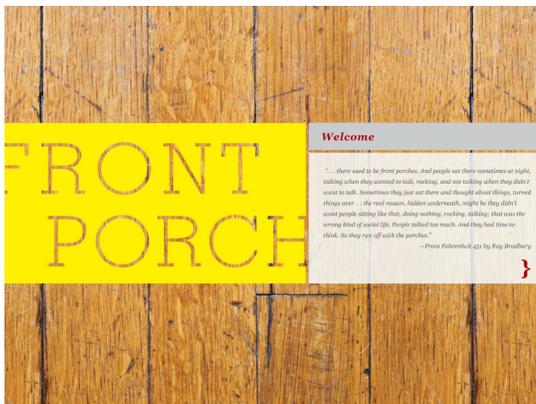
Eight variations of layout that experiment with color, front page elements, concept, and layout of the *FPJ* site.



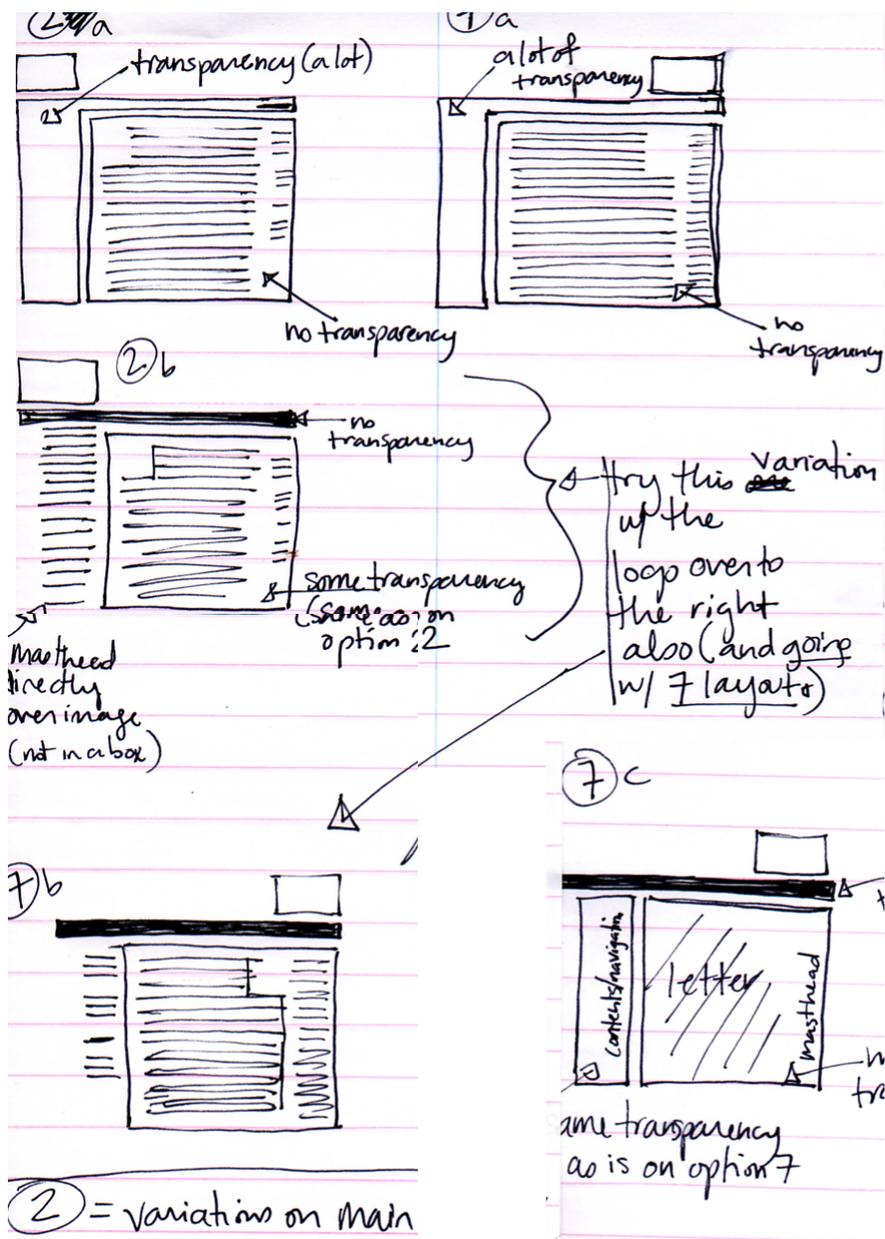


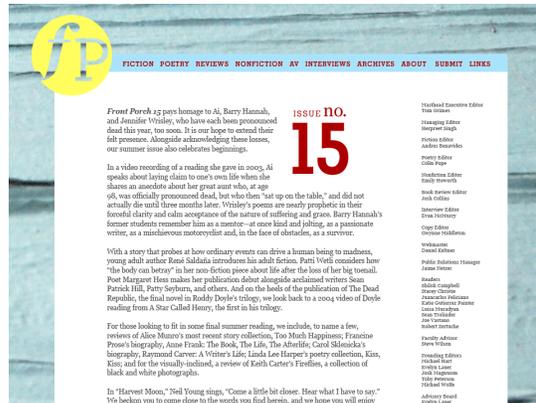
Wireframes are digital compositions of the a website design layout without content. This allowed to teach to concentrate on the final layout and refined areas for each part of the website without the distraction of the visual elements (Web Design Ledger, 2011).





After the team assessed digital compositions from Round 1, client feedback and sketches were made by the *FPJ* staff and designer to specific layouts to mock up for Round 2. The sketches focused on visual hierarchy of the page.



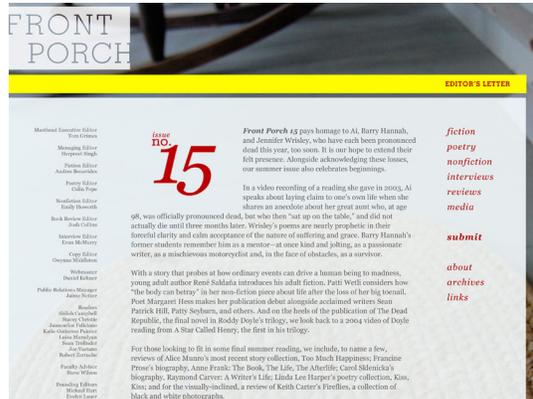




Front Porch 15 pays homage to Al, Barry Hannah, and Jennifer Wrisley, who have each been pronounced dead this year, too soon. It is our hope to extend their felt presence. Alongside acknowledging these losses, our summer issue also celebrates beginnings.



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VIMEO

Using a video library like Vimeo, an ad-free, media-hosting site like YouTube specifically for creative topics, allows like-minded creative people to stumble across talks on Vimeo, which would then link back to *FPJ*'s site, increasing page visits.

The screenshot shows the Vimeo profile page for 'Front Porch'. The profile name is 'Front Porch' with a 'plus' icon and 'Joined August 2010'. The profile picture is a large yellow 'FP' logo. To the right of the profile picture are statistics: 8 Videos, 0 Likes, 0 Contacts, 0 Groups, 0 Channels, and 0 Albums. Below these are 'Your recent videos' with three thumbnails: 'Francisco Goldman Reading 11/10/98', 'Richard Ford Reading 3/22/05', and 'Annie Proulx Reading and Q&A 10/22/10'. There are also sections for 'Recent activity' and 'Contacts'.

The screenshot shows a Vimeo video player for the video 'Richard Ford Reading 3/22/05' by 'Front Porch'. The video is currently playing at 34:28. To the right of the video player is a 'More' section with an 'Add' button and a 'Show me' dropdown menu set to 'my videos'. Below this is a list of other videos from the channel, including 'Goldman Reading 11/10/98', '7. Richard Ford Reading 3/22/05', '6. Annie Proulx Reading and Q&A 10/22/10', '5. Jean Valentine Reading 2/6/02', and '4. Carolyn Forché Reading'.

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FRONT
PORCH



TRANSPARENCIES ARE A MODERN
DESIGN TAKE ON LAYERING DIFFERENT
ELEMENTS AND SIGNIFY THE AIRY,
NOSTALGIC FEEL

BRAND MARK IS MODERN
TO JUXTAPOSE NOSTALGIC
IMAGERY



IMAGE SUGGESTS ARCHITECTURAL
DETAILS OF A PORCH AND HUMAN
REMNANTS OF BEING ON A PORCH

COLOR SUBTLY REFERENCES
TEXAS STATE AND THE MFA
PROGRAM, AND THE IDEA OF
COOLING DOWN IN A PORCH

APPLICATION »

FRONT PORCH

Enter.

Front Porch 16 pokes and prods, in various ways, at notions of preservation, restoration, renovation, and ground-up construction in relation to that which is old and that which is new in an ever-shifting literary landscape and in the broader cultural landscape.

FRONT PORCH

EDITOR'S LETTER

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HOW MIGHT KATHERINE Anne Porter feel seeing her historic childhood porches, pictured throughout this journal, imbued with present-day human interaction and its remnants?

issue
no. **16**

Front Porch 16 pokes and prods, in various ways, at notions of preservation, restoration, renovation, and ground-up construction in relation to that which is old and that which is new in an ever-shifting literary landscape and in the broader cultural landscape.

Our inaugural **blog** post ponders which books we should revisit to discover, and perhaps restore, the foundational truths they teach us about the craft of writing. In a collection of **interviews** with owners and representatives of nationally recognizable independent bookstores, we question how the traditional bookstore is persisting and reinventing itself in the age of Amazon and e-books. Our reviews respond to the work of authors who are young in their literary careers (**Aaron Kunin**, **Mathias Svalina**, **Christian TeBordo**), as well as to new books from veteran writers such as **Deborah Eisenberg**, **Don DeLillo**, and **Richard Burgin**.

In fiction, a conventional story-telling method is highlighted by the work of **John Matthew Fox**, who presents a man struggling against the conventions of marriage and aging. Appropriate to the story's form, the character comes to realize the relevance of conventions. On the other hand, **Dan Mancilla**, **Richard Fulco**, and **Leslie Doyle** dare to explore the less common forms short fiction takes. **Mancilla's** piece is written as a feature story from the perspective of a journalist. **Fulco's** story, written entirely in second person point of view, magnifies the life and discoveries of an adolescent boy. **Doyle** denies expectations about how many characters must breathe "in scene" and relies on meticulous linguistic choices to pace her work.

The poets in this issue, including **Lindsay Faber Chiat**, **John Estes**, and **Jen Jabaily-Blackburn**, all have excellent ears for rhythm and sound. While their styles are wildly disparate in approach and subject, their poems serve the wider purpose of showcasing the breadth of contemporary poetry.

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Issue 16 Fiction

Backyard Astronomer
by Leslie Doyle

LAST WEEK, LIAM ran his thumb down the right side of her head, looking for the bulge in her skull— “remodeled” according to the radiologist report. But he found nothing; the changes, they tell Annie, are all on the inside.

Lately, when Annie first wakes up, she tries to imagine what really exists in the empty space in her head. Cerebral fluid, they have told her, the same stuff that bathes her brain to cushion it from injury.

[[Read full piece](#)]

Horse Song
by John Matthew Fox

DIRK DROVE HOME with runes of baby blue paint across his overalls and forearms. When he looked in the rear-view mirror, he realized he even had flecks on his eyelids. He hated eyelid flecks. Couldn't use paint thinner or scrub hard, just had to wait them off. It never made any sense how they got there in the first place—he blinked, sure, but often enough that paint could land? He closed both eyes for a second and the light bled through in polka dots.

[[Read full piece](#)]

Three Chords and the Truth
by Richard Fulco

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Issue 16 Poetry

Landscape with Grief Approaching
by Melissa Barrett

There are footprints here, staring back at each other—nearly identical

[[Read full piece](#)]

Compunction
by Lindsay Faber Chiat

You could easily make a case of the ocean's garbled intentions

[[Read full piece.](#)]

California Ice Age
by Elizabeth Colen

1.

You stand under the eaves.
I'll watch from the house,

[[Read full piece](#)]

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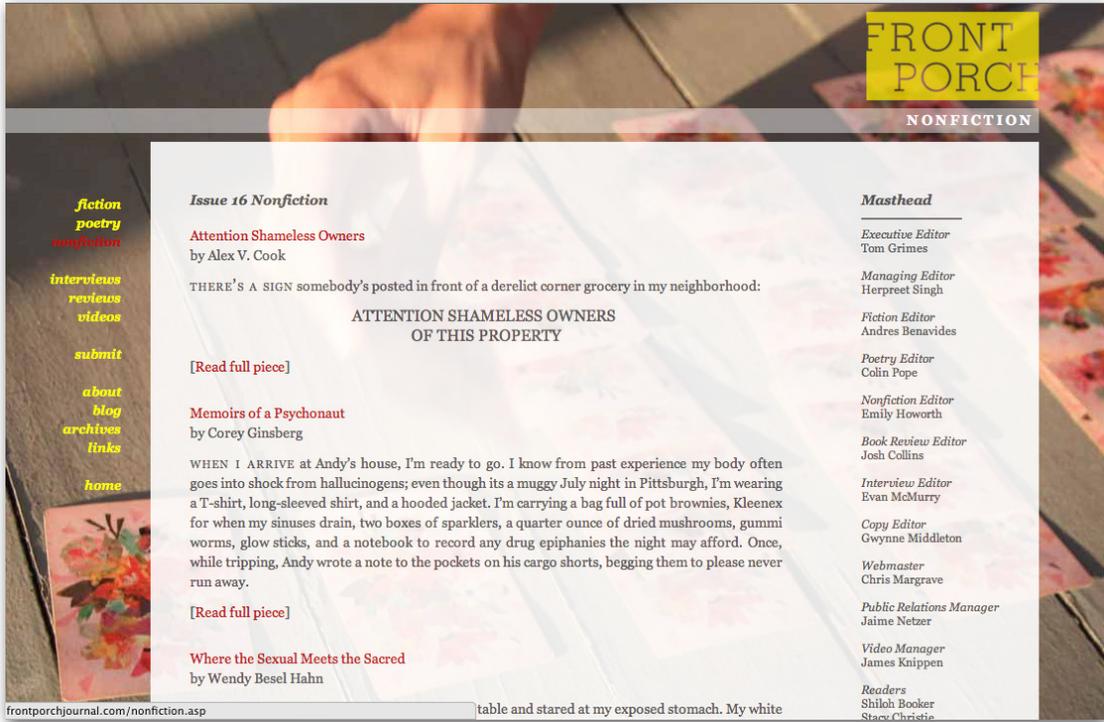
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Issue 16 Nonfiction

Attention Shameless Owners
by Alex V. Cook

THERE'S A SIGN somebody's posted in front of a derelict corner grocery in my neighborhood:

**ATTENTION SHAMELESS OWNERS
OF THIS PROPERTY**

[Read full piece]

Memoirs of a Psychonaut
by Corey Ginsberg

WHEN I ARRIVE at Andy's house, I'm ready to go. I know from past experience my body often goes into shock from hallucinogens; even though its a muggy July night in Pittsburgh, I'm wearing a T-shirt, long-sleeved shirt, and a hooded jacket. I'm carrying a bag full of pot brownies, Kleenex for when my sinuses drain, two boxes of sparklers, a quarter ounce of dried mushrooms, gummy worms, glow sticks, and a notebook to record any drug epiphanies the night may afford. Once, while tripping, Andy wrote a note to the pockets on his cargo shorts, begging them to please never run away.

[Read full piece]

Where the Sexual Meets the Sacred
by Wendy Besel Hahn

table and stared at my exposed stomach. My white

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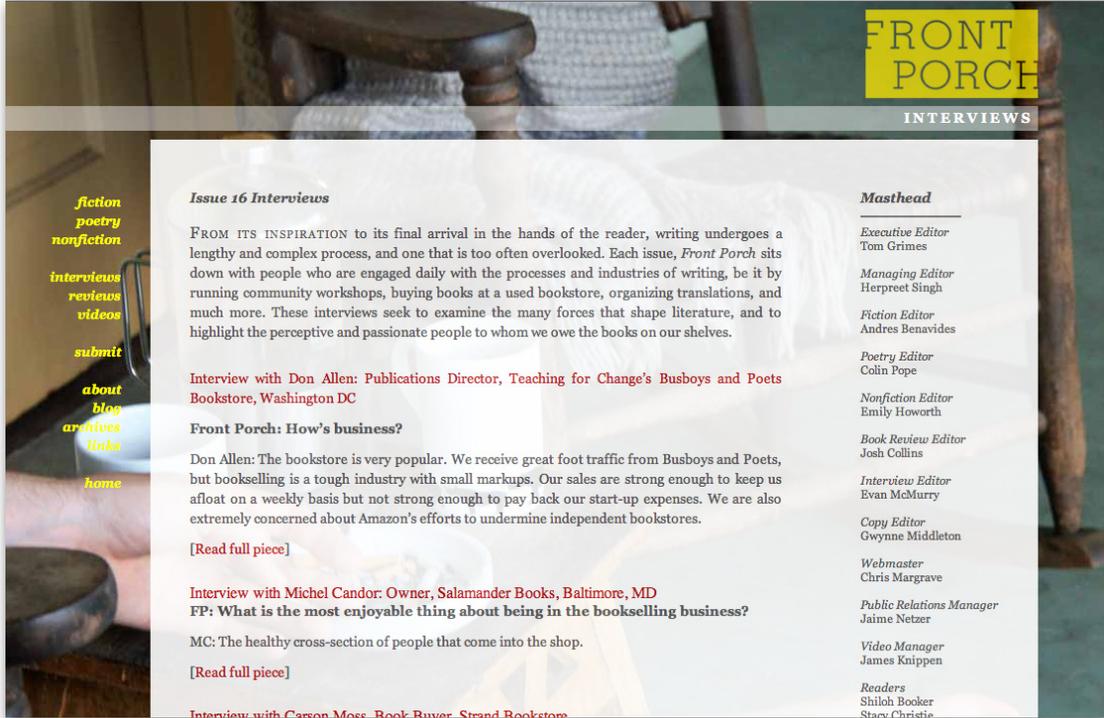
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Issue 16 Interviews

FROM ITS INSPIRATION to its final arrival in the hands of the reader, writing undergoes a lengthy and complex process, and one that is too often overlooked. Each issue, *Front Porch* sits down with people who are engaged daily with the processes and industries of writing, be it by running community workshops, buying books at a used bookstore, organizing translations, and much more. These interviews seek to examine the many forces that shape literature, and to highlight the perceptive and passionate people to whom we owe the books on our shelves.

Interview with Don Allen: Publications Director, Teaching for Change's Busboys and Poets Bookstore, Washington DC

Front Porch: How's business?

Don Allen: The bookstore is very popular. We receive great foot traffic from Busboys and Poets, but bookselling is a tough industry with small markups. Our sales are strong enough to keep us afloat on a weekly basis but not strong enough to pay back our start-up expenses. We are also extremely concerned about Amazon's efforts to undermine independent bookstores.

[Read full piece]

Interview with Michel Candor: Owner, Salamander Books, Baltimore, MD

FP: What is the most enjoyable thing about being in the bookselling business?

MC: The healthy cross-section of people that come into the shop.

[Read full piece]

Interview with Carson Moss: Book Buyer, Strand Bookstore

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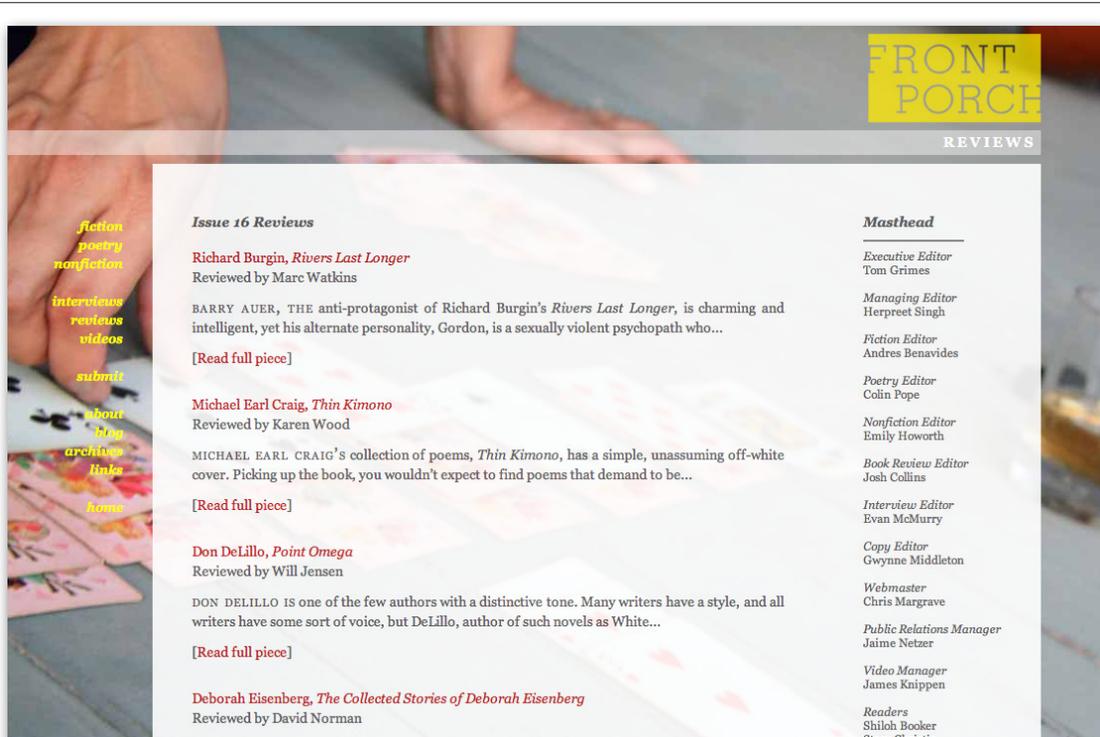
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Issue 16 Reviews

Richard Burgin, *Rivers Last Longer*
Reviewed by Marc Watkins

BARRY AUER, THE anti-protagonist of Richard Burgin's *Rivers Last Longer*, is charming and intelligent, yet his alternate personality, Gordon, is a sexually violent psychopath who...

[Read full piece]

Michael Earl Craig, *Thin Kimono*
Reviewed by Karen Wood

MICHAEL EARL CRAIG'S collection of poems, *Thin Kimono*, has a simple, unassuming off-white cover. Picking up the book, you wouldn't expect to find poems that demand to be...

[Read full piece]

Don DeLillo, *Point Omega*
Reviewed by Will Jensen

DON DELILLO IS one of the few authors with a distinctive tone. Many writers have a style, and all writers have some sort of voice, but DeLillo, author of such novels as *White...*

[Read full piece]

Deborah Eisenberg, *The Collected Stories of Deborah Eisenberg*
Reviewed by David Norman

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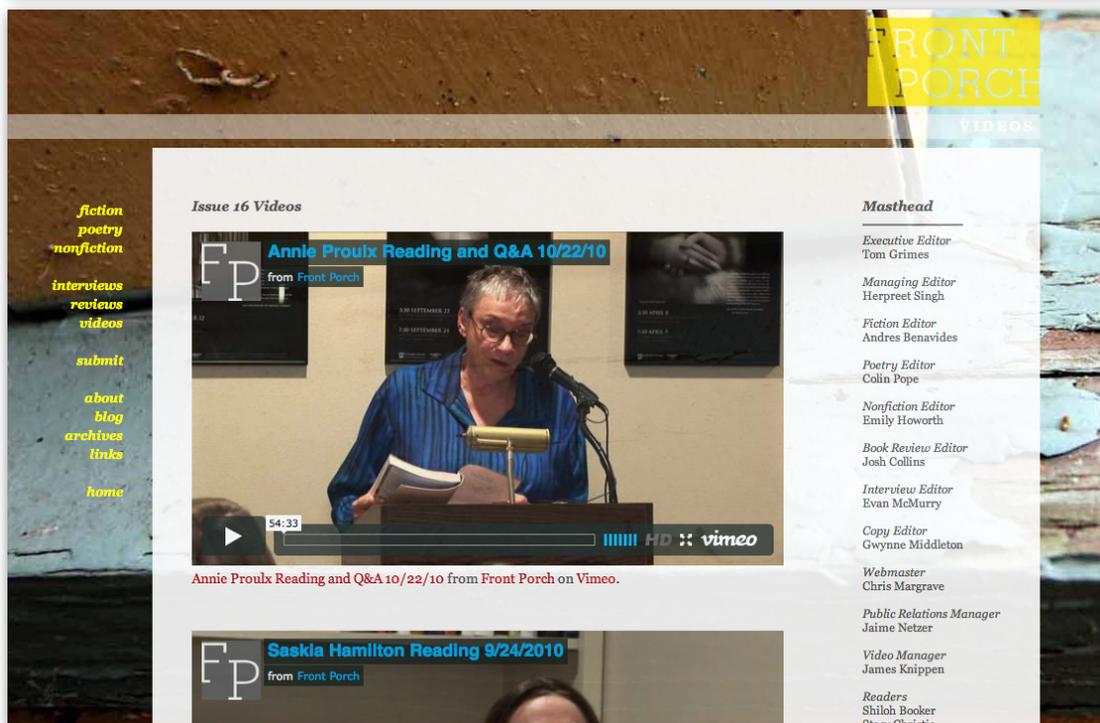
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Issue 16 Videos

Annie Proulx Reading and Q&A 10/22/10
from Front Porch

Saskia Hamilton Reading 9/24/2010
from Front Porch

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Front Porch accepts flash fiction, short stories, poetry, and creative nonfiction. Please submit only one piece of fiction and nonfiction at a time (up to or around 5500 words), and no more than five poems at a time as DOC. or RTF. files only. You must submit via our [online system](#).

Our response time is generally 3-4 months, but may be longer. We accept unsolicited simultaneous submissions, given that you promptly inform us upon acceptance elsewhere. We do not accept previously published material. *Front Porch* asks for first serial rights and the right to keep your work in our archives; all other rights revert back to the author after publication. We also ask that authors mention that their work first saw publication in *Front Porch* in any future reprints.

Please note: We only accept electronic submissions via our [online system](#). Paper submissions will not be read or returned.

Book Reviews

We encourage publicists to send us catalogues and review copies of forthcoming titles. Please email frontporchjournal@gmail.com with any inquiries. You may send literary fiction, poetry, and nonfiction books for review consideration to:

Front Porch
MFA Program
Department of English
Texas State University
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666

Other questions or comments regarding the journal can be sent to

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FRONT PORCH

BLOG

*fiction
poetry
nonfiction*

*interviews
reviews
videos*

submit

*about
blog
archives
links*

home

To read or to re-read?

November 2, 2010 – 3:38 pm

I'VE SEEN MY fellow MFA students pull books out of their pockets along with cigarettes as though the paperback was as necessary as the lighter in facilitating the cigarette break. We're all constantly trading books and scribbling down recommended titles. One student at Texas State posted her summer reading list to Facebook—and actually cared enough to post a follow-up note, at the end of the summer, tracking her progress and chastising herself for those titles she didn't quite make it to in her months off. I live with a poet, and our mailbox is regularly filled with padded manila envelopes: We both have an Amazon problem. It's all with good reason, too.

Reading is research; reading is worth as much as workshop instruction (or more); reading is obligatory. A thousand quotes from a thousand respectable writers give us the same advice over and over again: In order to write, you must read, and read *a lot*. We nod respectfully. Yes, we will read. And we obey cheerfully. We've always been reading nerds. But there are so many new titles, so many unread classics, so many freaking words, that one thing that sometimes gets left behind, at least for me, is re-reading.

Last week, Tim O'Brien assigned the first few chapters of *The Sun Also Rises* for a workshop he was leading. And so, Friday, I sat outside in seventy-degree weather and re-read. It had been several years since my first time around with the book, and to my surprise, I found it difficult to stop after the first few chapters. I found myself eager to re-meet Jake Barnes and Lady Ashley; I found myself looking for a pen to underline Hemingway's words.

Part of my interest may have been that in the time since I first read *The Sun Also Rises*, I have actually been to Spain, actually seen reruns of bull fights on Spanish television, actually driven in a car through olive tree-covered hillsides. In the same way that anyone who has ever lived in New

Front Porch on Facebook

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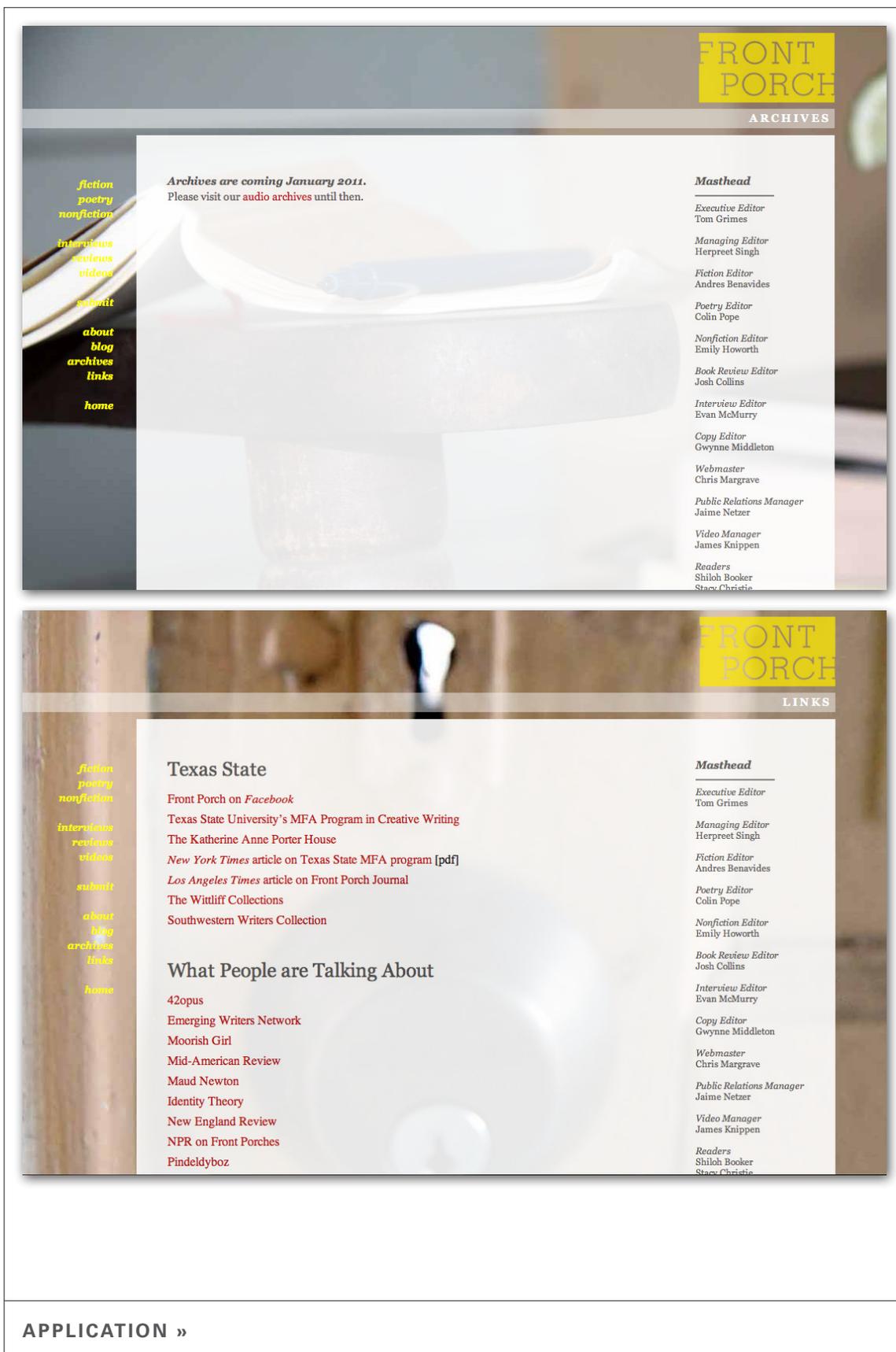
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Google Analytics allows *FPJ* to view where visitors are coming from, how long they spend on they site, where they got the link from, and other information that can help *FPJ* see who their audience is. A report can be found in Appendix B of this document.

INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH

METHODS

RESULTS

CONCLUSION

Brand touchpoints are applications that extend the brand into other means to communicate with an audience (Wheeler, 2009, p. 142) and “increase awareness and build customer loyalty” (p. 3). As most of *FPJ*'s communications are online, finding innovative and effective ways to reach viewers is important. Tactile applications include “giveaway” items, such as notebooks, t-shirts, and bags, because staff promote *FPJ* through trade shows. Online brand extensions include further developing *FPJ*'s social media strategies using Facebook, Twitter, E-newsletters, and mobile applications.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Using social media to connect with readers and writers who enjoy the journal can provide priceless opportunities to *FPJ*. Benefits include the possibility of reaching an even larger audience, increasing the number of submissions, readers, and site visitors. Social networking websites offer ways to share content, update users constantly on issues or website updates, and begin online conversations about literature. Tapping into the social media phase interested *FPJ* staff, but they preferred to wait to push their launch until the new website and content were up and will be integrated actively in an upcoming issue. Fan pages on networks such as Facebook and Twitter will drive the actions to create the virtual space of Front Porch.

E-NEWSLETTERS

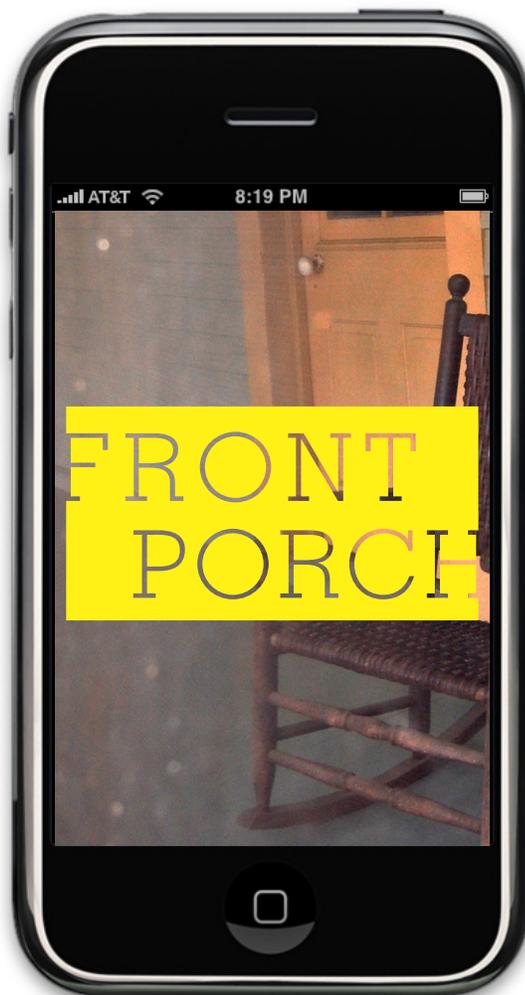
E-mailed newsletters can keep people up to date on release dates of issues and is another way for *FPJ* to communicate with their readers and writers. Designing the newsletter and any e-communication will help brand consistency.

The screenshot shows the Facebook interface for the 'Front Porch (Front Porch Journal)' page. The top navigation bar includes 'facebook', a search bar, and links for 'Home', 'Profile', and 'Account'. The page header features the 'Front Porch' logo and a 'Send Message' button. The left sidebar lists the 'Wall' tab and a list of 1887 friends, including Shawn Sturgeon, Samuel Richard Simon, Shafiqul Islam, Bee Button, Alice Anderson, Kate Braverman, Maureen Mullis, and B  ef J  rky B  uquet. The main content area displays a post by Christine Hamm with a poem snippet: 'second poem mostly made from phrases from my next book. As if the moon were still ripe for decontamination. In the sun, he lies on his back and rips the hole larger with his thumb. In the shadows later, he drinks half a warm diet coke. In the mirror, I check my teeth, to see if they're still broken...'. Below this is a post by Denise Douros about a photo app, and a post from Brit Writers about a submission deadline. A sponsored advertisement for 'bethenny EVER AFTER' is also visible on the right side.

IPHONE APPLICATION

Building a mobile application would extend the brand experience *FPJ's* new website design, where the end user can take issues of *Front Porch* everywhere they go, creating their own virtual porch.

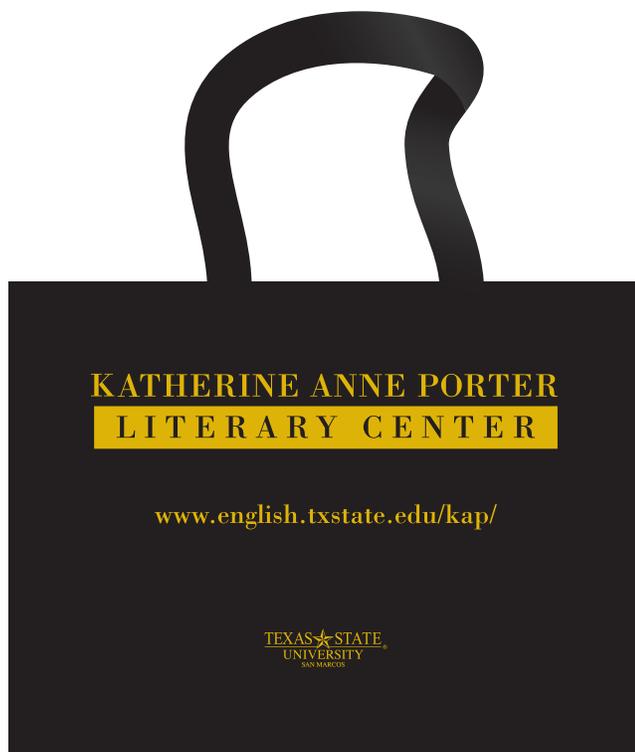
Users would be able to read content from the latest issues, share content with others, access media from the videos and audio archives, access the blog, download background front porch images for the backgrounds of their mobile devices, and contact *FPJ* through e-mail, Twitter, or Facebook.



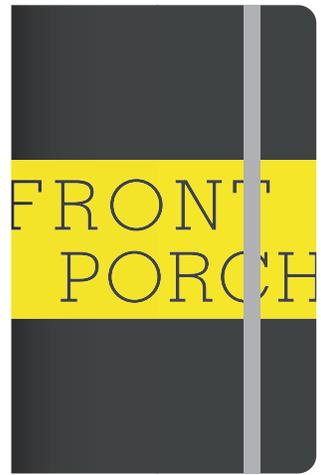
TRADE SHOW GOODS

Wheeler states “a trade show is not a trade show without stuff” (2009, p. 170). However, trade shows can leave a visitor with more ephemera than they need. Rather create short term promotional items, objects related to writing or have a long term use were presented. Objects include reusable tote bags, t-shirts, and moleskin notebooks all with the brand screen printed onto each item.

The tote bags were realized shortly after the launch, and incorporated the brand with the KAP house’s new branding, set in Bodoni. To keep the type consistent on the bags, Bodoni replaced Georgia in the *FPJ* website address.







APPENDIX A

Front Porch Typographic Style Guide

The logo consists of a solid yellow rectangular background. The words "FRONT" and "PORCH" are written in a white, serif, all-caps font, stacked vertically in the center of the rectangle.

FRONT
PORCH

Writing Style Guide

Updated: April 2, 2011

General Rules

ALL sections should be left justified (unless specified by author)

Author Name: Georgia 12pt Bold

Title of Piece: Georgia 19pt (or headers of any section)

FIRST 3 WORDS OF PIECE: 12PT SMALL CAPITALS (FOR ALL GENRES EXCEPT FOR INTERVIEWS AND POETRY) [INSTRUCTIONS FOR WORD ON NEXT PAGE]

Body copy: 11pt (do not justify)

Author name Bio is same as body copy (Georgia 11pt, no justified text), where name of publications are *italic*.

On Masthead:

FPJ staff roles are always italic, while staff member names are not.

Issues names and Front Porch (i.e. *Front Porch 16* or *Front Porch*) are always *italic* and in the same font size as context they are in.

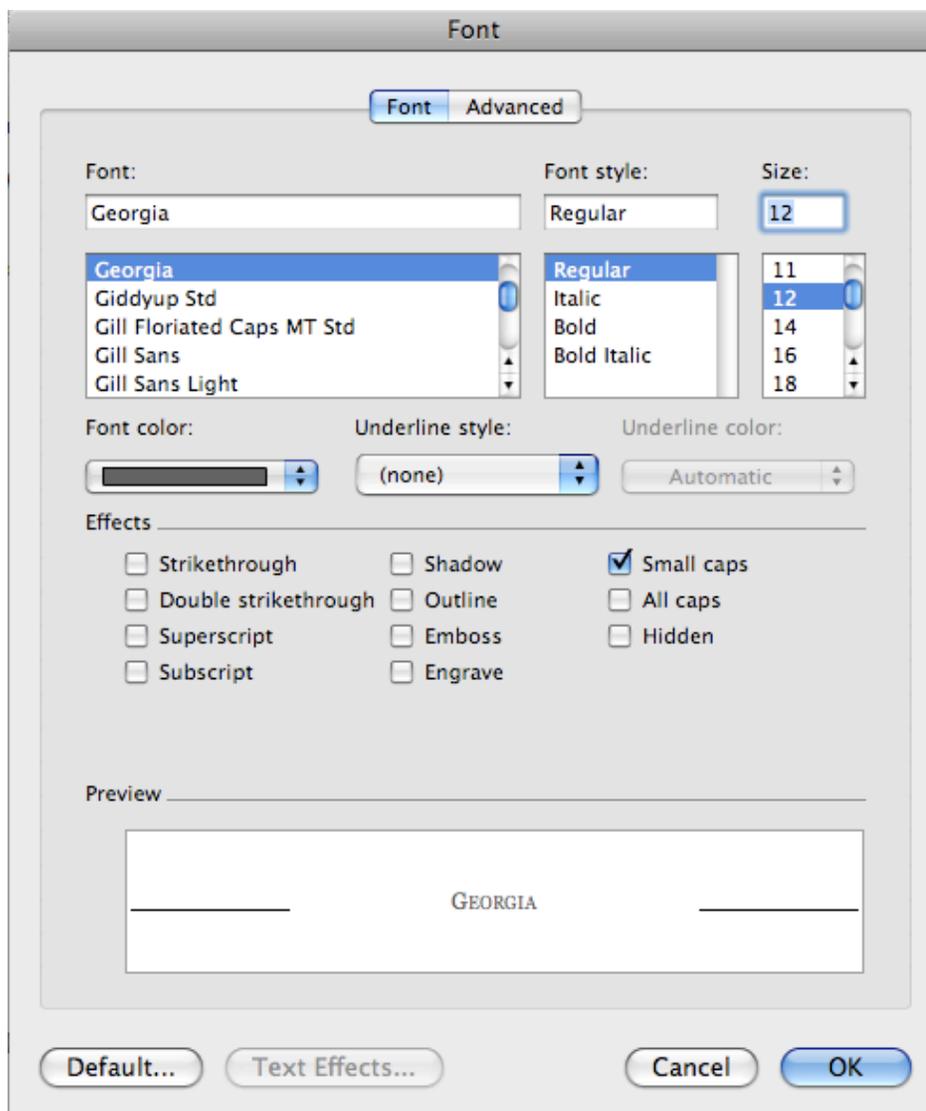
University name is always Texas State University-San Marcos (use hyphen without spaces between University and San).

How to create Small Caps in Word.

Small caps are Capital letters that are the same height as lower case letters.

FIRST 3 WORDS OF MOST PIECES ARE 12PT SMALL CAPITALS (FOR ALL GENRES EXCEPT FOR INTERVIEWS AND POETRY)

1. Make all letters in the first 3 words of piece lowercase (not title or author).
2. Highlight first 3 words of piece.
3. Go to the FORMAT menu and select Font. [Image of menu below]
4. Change font to “Georgia”, size to “12” and in the check boxes below select small caps.
5. Hit “Done” or “Okay.”



LANDING PAGE



EDITOR'S LETTER

EDITOR'S LETTER

HOW MIGHT KATHERINE Anne Porter feel seeing her historic childhood porches, pictured throughout this journal, imbued with present-day human interaction and its remnants?

Front Porch 16 pokes and prods, in various ways, at notions of preservation, restoration, renovation, and ground-up construction in relation to that which is old and that which is new in an ever-shifting literary landscape and in the broader cultural landscape.

Our inaugural **blog** post ponders which books we should revisit to discover, and perhaps restore, the foundational truths they teach us about the craft of writing. In a collection of **interviews** with owners and representatives of nationally recognizable independent bookstores, we question how the traditional bookstore is persisting and reinventing itself in the age of Amazon and e-books. Our reviews respond to the work of authors who are young in their literary careers (**Aaron Kunin**, **Mathias Svalina**, **Christian TeBordo**), as well as to new books from veteran writers such as **Deborah Eisenberg**, **Don DeLillo**, and **Richard Burgin**.

In fiction, a conventional story-telling method is highlighted by the work of **John Matthew Fox**, who presents a man struggling against the conventions of marriage and aging. Appropriate to the story's form, the character comes to realize the relevance of conventions. On the other hand, **Dan Mancilla**, **Richard Fulco**, and **Leslie Doyle** dare to explore the less common forms short fiction takes. **Mancilla's** piece is written as a feature story from the perspective of a journalist. **Fulco's** story, written entirely in second person point of view, magnifies the life and discoveries of an adolescent boy. **Doyle** denies expectations about how many characters must breathe "in scene" and relies on meticulous linguistic choices to pace her work.

The poets in this issue, including **Lindsay Faber Chiat**, **John Estes**, and **Jen Jabaily-Blackburn**, all have excellent ears for rhythm and sound. While their styles are wildly disparate in approach and subject, their poems serve the wider purpose of showcasing the breadth of contemporary poetry.

issue
no.

16

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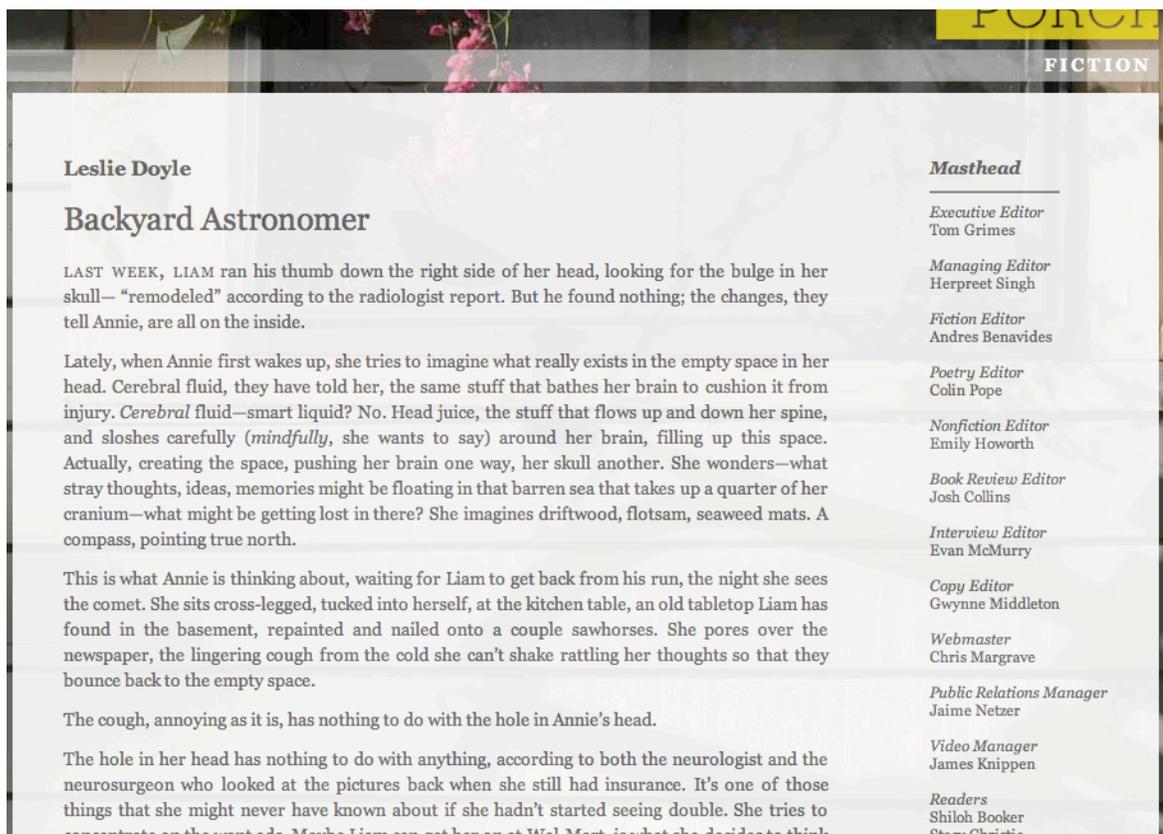
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FICTION



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Body: 11pt (do not justify-this happens in web coding)

Author name Bio is same as body copy (Georgia 11pt, no justified text), where name of publications are *italic*.

NONFICTION

Alex V. Cook

Attention Shameless Owners

THERE'S A SIGN somebody's posted in front of a derelict corner grocery in my neighborhood:

ATTENTION SHAMELESS OWNERS
OF THIS PROPERTY

PLEASE CLEAN UP THIS EYESORE,
MENACE TO SOCIETY MAGNET,

**TOXIC
WASTELAND**

THANK YOU,
CAPITAL HEIGHTS

The sign's staple-gunned to a telephone pole. The derelict grocery, an eyesore for decades, has disintegrated further in the past year or so. About 15 years ago, the old guy who ran the place filled it with hoarder junk and still kept it open—nominally—as a store. I went in once during my garage sale years and tried to buy a guitar, a lamp, and a box of reel-to-reel tapes, but the guy told me none of those items were for sale. “Display items,” he growled from a vinyl lawnchair, holding court among his treasures. He begrudgingly sold me a tape measure, the one item on my list of things to buy from an actual store later that day. I never went back, figuring that’s all I was getting out of him.

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Title of Nonfiction Piece: Georgia 19pt

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FIRST 3 WORDS OF PIECE: 12PT SMALL CAPITALS

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Author name Bio is same as body copy (Georgia 11pt, no justified text), where name of publications are *italic*.

POETRY

Melissa Barrett

Landscape with Grief Approaching

There are footprints here, staring back
at each other—nearly identical

but I can't remember which way I came,
and when. It's the same dream:

running after you, after the sun, after
you, on a blacksanded beach with daisies

glowering in both hands. The trees
rattle their poms and the breath of water

tinctures the air. Each moment grayer,
your name rolls from my mouth less alive.

I'm chasing you with dying flowers, don't
you see? Our bloodorange September—

I was stable on this world, my conviction
with the strength of barbells. You pulled

my hair around the heart of my chin
and now I can't stop writing your address

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INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEWS

Interview with Don Allen: Publications Director, Teaching for Change’s Busboys and Poets Bookstore, Washington DC

Front Porch: How’s business?

Don Allen: The bookstore is very popular. We receive great foot traffic from Busboys and Poets, but bookselling is a tough industry with small markups. Our sales are strong enough to keep us afloat on a weekly basis but not strong enough to pay back our start-up expenses. We are also extremely concerned about Amazon’s efforts to undermine independent bookstores.

FP: What is the most enjoyable thing about being in the bookselling business?

DA: Even with all of the so-called new media out there, books still have the potential to be the most powerful medium of them all. Complex ideas are explored over hundreds of pages and over several days, giving the ideas time to sink in and take root, changing a person. Being exposed to an idea or concept through social media or an article just doesn’t have the same impact. Meeting authors who yield this power wisely is still a thrill.

FP: What is the hardest part about being in the bookselling business?

DA: First and foremost, it is hard to convince people that a company like Amazon is not acting in their best interests. Sure, it is cheap, but only in the short term. As Amazon uses unfair pricing and proprietary electronic book readers to drive independent booksellers out of business, the industry will produce fewer books because there will be fewer outlets. Plus, unless people learn to support local, community bookstores, they will not have a place to hear authors, share ideas, and organize. A world with only an online marketplace and virtual social organizing will be a poorer place with less chance of creating positive social change.

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Interviewee: 11pt (do not justify)

Author name Bio is same as body copy (Georgia 11pt, no justified text), where name of publications are *italic*.

REVIEWS

REVIEWS

Rivers Last Longer

Richard Burgin, *Rivers Last Longer*
 Publisher: Texas Review Press
 2010, 224 pages, paperback, \$19

BARRY AUER, THE anti-protagonist of Richard Burgin's *Rivers Last Longer*, is charming and intelligent, yet his alternate personality, Gordon, is a sexually violent psychopath who carries around the ashes of his recently departed mother when he visits prostitutes. Elliot, Barry's estranged best friend, reenters Barry's life unaware of his friend's dangerous hobbies. The two attempt to start a literary magazine in New York; Elliot does not have Barry's wealth, but he is a talented writer, a trait Barry does not possess, and together, the pair moves forward with the magazine, rekindling their lost friendship. But when Elliot falls in love with Cheri, a beautiful artist, Barry and his alternate personalities feel threatened, and Barry's world is in peril. *Rivers Last Longer* marks Richard Burgin's thirteenth published book, and this five-time winner of the Pushcart Prize shows his keen wit throughout the novel.

We're never asked to sympathize with Barry. He wasn't abused as a child. His mother wasn't emotionally distant or controlling. The reader finds none of the typical devices often employed in literary thrillers to help us empathize with an anti-protagonist like Barry. Instead, the reader is rewarded by Burgin's lavishly detailed portrait of a psychopath, which engages the reader through fascination rather than mock empathy or shock. The private world Barry has made for himself threatens to dissolve at any moment, a threat that fills his life with anxiety and gives his character an almost manic voice:

Lately, women had been tricking him a lot one way or another. There was Marianne and the whore in Madrid and then Jordan, who had more than tricked him. It was the essence of humiliation, he thought. the very essence. and yet it had happened again

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Title of Piece: Georgia 19pt

Author Name in Georgia 11pt, *Author's piece in same font but italic*

Publisher: Publish Name in Georgia 11pt

Year, pages, paperback/hardcover, \$price in Georgia 11pt (on one line)

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Body Copy: Georgia 11pt (do not justify)

Author name Bio is same as body copy (Georgia 11pt, no justified text), where name of publications are *italic*.

VIDEOS

VIDEOS

Issue 16 Videos

FP **Annie Proulx Reading and Q&A 10/22/10**
from Front Porch

54:33 HD :: vimeo

Annie Proulx Reading and Q&A 10/22/10 from Front Porch on Vimeo.

FP **Saskia Hamilton Reading 9/24/2010**
from Front Porch

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Caption Copy: Georgia 11pt below each video.

SUBMIT

SUBMIT

Front Porch accepts flash fiction, short stories, poetry, and creative nonfiction. Please submit only one piece of fiction and nonfiction at a time (up to or around 5500 words), and no more than five poems at a time as DOC. or RTF. files only. You must submit via our **online system**.

Our response time is generally 3-4 months, but may be longer. We accept unsolicited simultaneous submissions, given that you promptly inform us upon acceptance elsewhere. We do not accept previously published material. *Front Porch* asks for first serial rights and the right to keep your work in our archives; all other rights revert back to the author after publication. We also ask that authors mention that their work first saw publication in *Front Porch* in any future reprints.

Please note: We only accept electronic submissions via our **online system**. Paper submissions will not be read or returned.

Book Reviews

We encourage publicists to send us catalogues and review copies of forthcoming titles. Please email frontporchjournal@gmail.com with any inquiries. You may send literary fiction, poetry, and nonfiction books for review consideration to:

Front Porch
MFA Program
Department of English
Texas State University
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666

Other questions or comments regarding the journal can be sent to

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ABOUT

ABOUT

“...there used to be front porches. And people sat there sometimes at night, talking when they wanted to talk, rocking, and not talking when they didn’t want to talk. Sometimes they just sat there and thought about things, turned things over. ...the real reason, hidden underneath, might be they didn’t want people sitting like that, doing nothing, rocking, talking; that was the wrong kind of social life. People talked too much. And they had time to think. So they ran off with the porches.”

—From *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury

Front Porch is the online literary journal of Texas State University’s MFA program. Founded in 2006 by MFA students, *Front Porch* publishes exceptional poetry, fiction, nonfiction, reviews, and interviews. We’re also pleased to feature a one-of-a-kind video and audio archive, which showcases celebrated authors reading and discussing their work.

At *Front Porch*, you will find some of the best and most renowned talents in contemporary writing published alongside promising new voices. Our editors seek out both innovative and traditional literature. In short, we’re looking for insightful and relevant writing that excels, no matter its form. Visit our submissions page, join our mailing list, or do both. We would love to hear from you.

***Front Porch* Staff Reminisces**

“Sitting on porch swings that hung from porches at my various dwellings in lush-green and humid Baton Rouge, the place I most naturally call home, I have witnessed a panic-stricken girl break

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For Staff Reminisces

Body Copy: Georgia 11pt

Use an Em Dash (—), not a hyphen (-) then state your name, *your position (in italics)*.

I.e. — Herpreet Singh, *Managing Editor*.

BLOG

BLOG

To read or to re-read?

November 2, 2010 – 3:38 pm

I'VE SEEN MY fellow MFA students pull books out of their pockets along with cigarettes as though the paperback was as necessary as the lighter in facilitating the cigarette break. We're all constantly trading books and scribbling down recommended titles. One student at Texas State posted her summer reading list to Facebook—and actually cared enough to post a follow-up note, at the end of the summer, tracking her progress and chastising herself for those titles she didn't quite make it to in her months off. I live with a poet, and our mailbox is regularly filled with padded manila envelopes: We both have an Amazon problem. It's all with good reason, too.

Reading is research; reading is worth as much as workshop instruction (or more); reading is obligatory. A thousand quotes from a thousand respectable writers give us the same advice over and over again: In order to write, you must read, and read *a lot*. We nod respectfully. Yes, we will read. And we obey cheerfully. We've always been reading nerds. But there are so many new titles, so many unread classics, so many freaking words, that one thing that sometimes gets left behind, at least for me, is re-reading.

Last week, Tim O'Brien assigned the first few chapters of *The Sun Also Rises* for a workshop he was leading. And so, Friday, I sat outside in seventy-degree weather and re-read. It had been several years since my first time around with the book, and to my surprise, I found it difficult to stop after the first few chapters. I found myself eager to re-meet Jake Barnes and Lady Ashley; I found myself looking for a pen to underline Hemingway's words.

Part of my interest may have been that in the time since I first read *The Sun Also Rises*, I have actually been to Spain, actually seen reruns of bull fights on Spanish television, actually driven in a car through olive tree-covered hillsides. In the same way that anyone who has ever lived in New

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Title of Post: Georgia 19pt. (Unless blog title is a question with a specific formatting use initials capitals in title.)

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FIRST 3 WORDS OF PIECE: 12PT SMALL CAPITALS

Body Copy: Georgia 11pt (do not justify—this happens in web coding)

[IN WORDPRESS]

Title: Formatted by WordPress.

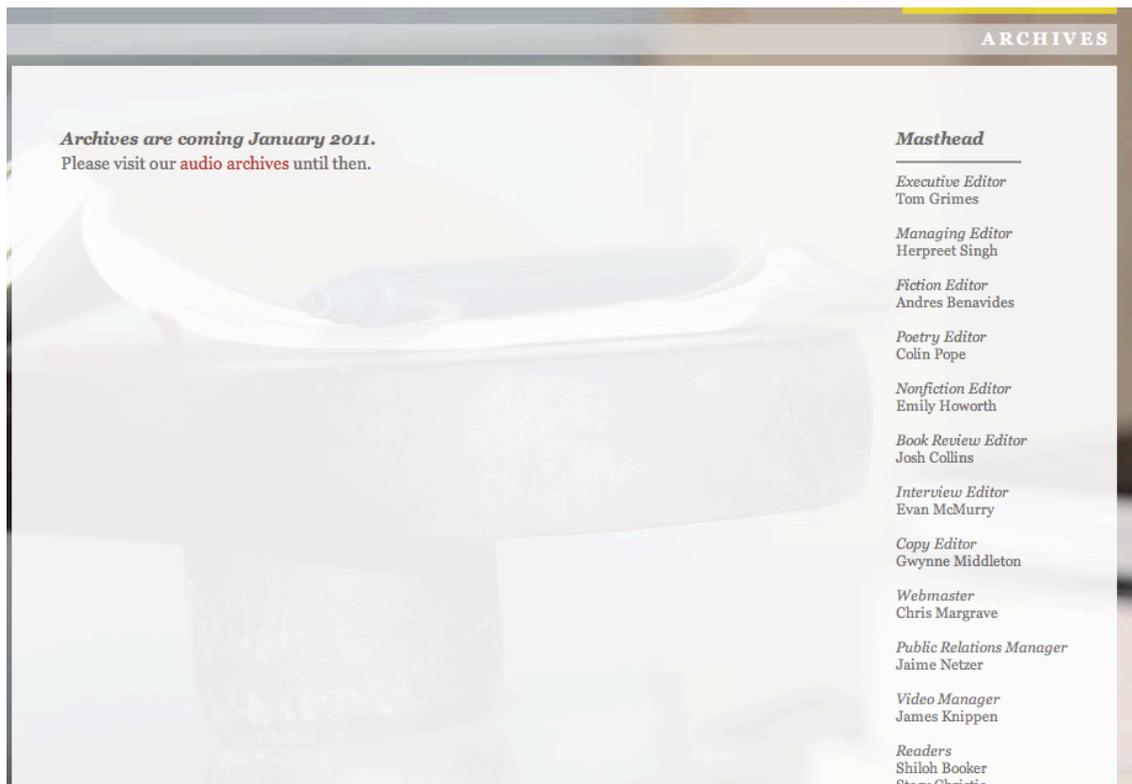
WordPress will add post time and date.

(The PR Manager must format Blog)

FIRST 3 WORDS OF PIECE: START BLOG POST WITH THIS HTML CODE: ` REPLACE WORD IN HERE ONLY `

The first 3 words code should be added after writing and formatting entire post. Then click HTML tab at top right and then replace first 3 words of code with this.

ARCHIVES



(do not justify—this happens in web coding)

Heading: Georgia 19pt

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Body Copy: Georgia 11pt (do not justify)

LINKS

LINKS

Texas State

- Front Porch on *Facebook*
- Texas State University's MFA Program in Creative Writing
- The Katherine Anne Porter House
- New York Times* article on Texas State MFA program [pdf]
- Los Angeles Times* article on Front Porch Journal
- The Wittliff Collections
- Southwestern Writers Collection

What People are Talking About

- 42opus
- Emerging Writers Network
- Moorish Girl
- Mid-American Review
- Maud Newton
- Identity Theory
- New England Review
- NPR on Front Porches
- Pindeldyboz

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Jaime Netzer

Video Manager
James Knippen

Readers
Shiloh Booker
Stacy Christie

(do not justify links at all)

Heading: Georgia 19pt

[One 12pt line space]

Title of Link, link address (link will be made active through coding)

APPENDIX B

Google Analytics™ Report

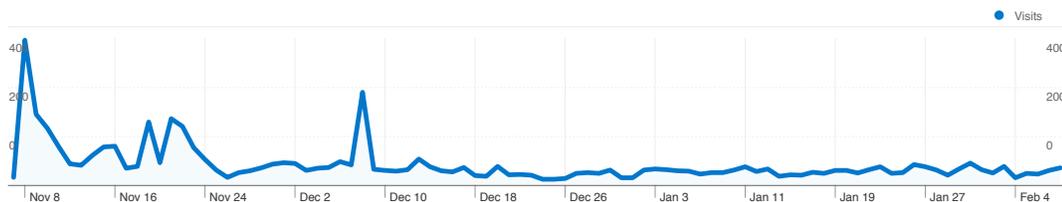
FRONT PORCH JOURNAL

Google Analytics Report

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION » GOOGLE ANALYTICS

www.frontporchjournal.com
Dashboard

Nov 7, 2010 - Feb 8, 2011
 Comparing to: Site



Site Usage

5,359 Visits

49.23% Bounce Rate

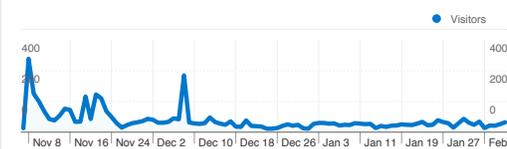
15,136 Pageviews

00:02:09 Avg. Time on Site

2.82 Pages/Visit

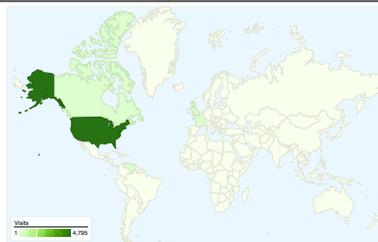
70.93% % New Visits

Visitors Overview

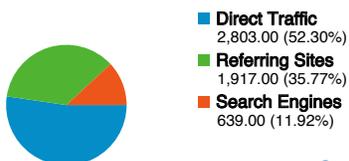


Visitors
3,803

Map Overlay



Traffic Sources Overview



Content Overview

Pages	Pageviews	% Pageviews
/index.asp	3,143	20.77%
/submit.asp	1,452	9.59%
/poetry.asp	914	6.04%
/fiction.asp	775	5.12%
/interviews.asp	559	3.69%

NUMBER OF VISITS
 IN THREE MONTHS

NUMBER OF UNIQUE
 VISITORS

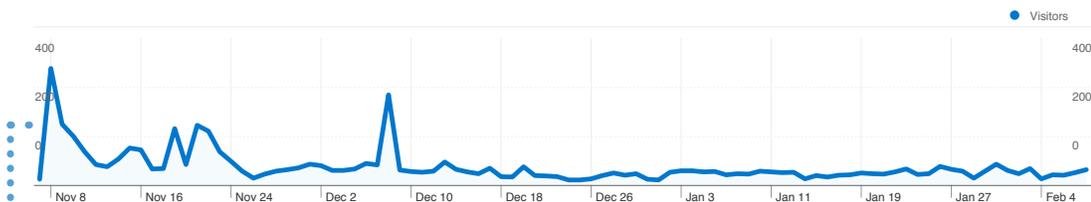
HOW USERS ARE
 GETTING TO THE FPJ

MOST VISITED PAGES

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION » GOOGLE ANALYTICS

www.frontporchjournal.com
Visitors Overview

Nov 7, 2010 - Feb 8, 2011
 Comparing to: Site



3,803 people visited this site

5,359 Visits

3,803 Absolute Unique Visitors

15,136 Pageviews

2.82 Average Pageviews

00:02:09 Time on Site

49.23% Bounce Rate

70.93% New Visits

Technical Profile

Browser	Visits	% visits	Connection Speed	Visits	% visits
Firefox	1,931	36.03%	Cable	2,423	45.21%
Internet Explorer	1,445	26.96%	DSL	1,025	19.13%
Safari	1,254	23.40%	Unknown	948	17.69%
Chrome	488	9.11%	T1	871	16.25%
Opera	151	2.82%	Dialup	74	1.38%

BROWSERS USED BY VISITORS

INTERNET SPEED OF VISITORS

NUMBER OF VISITORS EACH DAY INCLUDING THE 396 VISITS ON THE LAUNCH DATE.

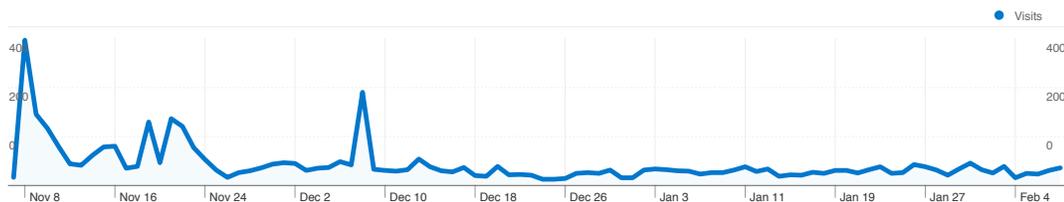
SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION » GOOGLE ANALYTICS

www.frontporchjournal.com

Traffic Sources Overview

Nov 7, 2010 - Feb 8, 2011

Comparing to: Site



All traffic sources sent a total of 5,359 visits

52.30% Direct Traffic

35.77% Referring Sites

11.92% Search Engines



- Direct Traffic
2,803.00 (52.30%)
- Referring Sites
1,917.00 (35.77%)
- Search Engines
639.00 (11.92%)

Top Traffic Sources

Sources	Visits	% visits	Keywords	Visits	% visits
(direct) ((none))	2,803	52.30%	front porch journal	54	8.45%
google (organic)	552	10.30%	william reese hamilton	50	7.82%
facebook.com (referral)	319	5.95%	front porch literary journal	36	5.63%
huffingtonpost.com (referral)	277	5.17%	front porch poetry	18	2.82%
duotrope.com (referral)	162	3.02%	front porch review	9	1.41%

NUMBER OF VISITS LINKED FROM OTHER WEBSITES; DIRECT REPRESENTS THE NUMBER OF VISITS JUST FROM TYPING IN THE WEBSITE ADDRESS

MOST COMMON KEYWORDS SEARCHED TO FIND THE JOURNAL

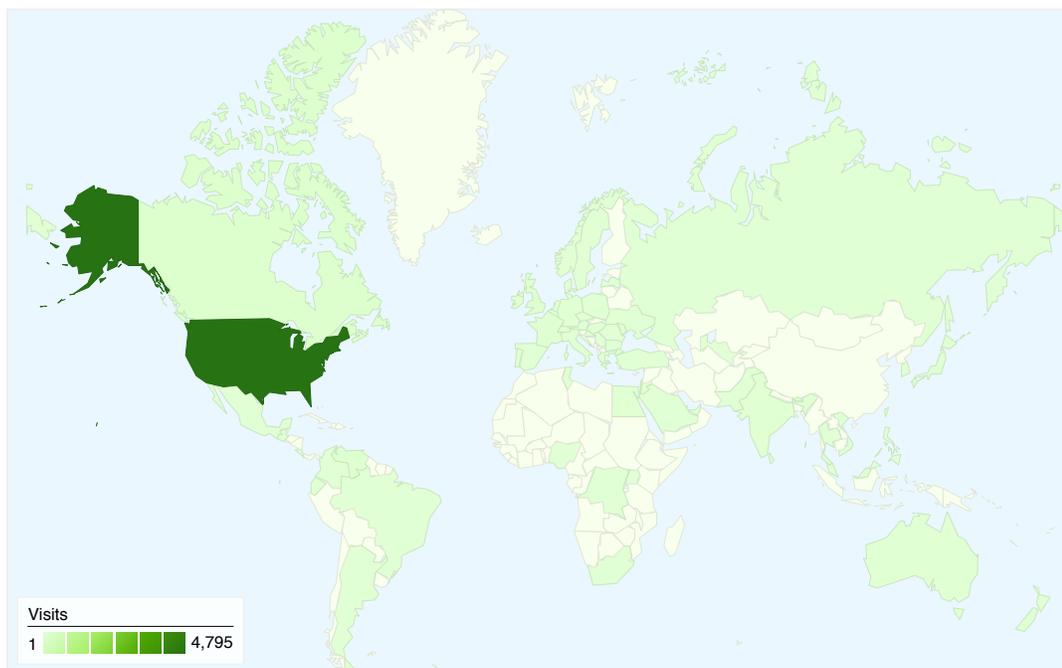
SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION » GOOGLE ANALYTICS

www.frontporchjournal.com

Map Overlay

Nov 7, 2010 - Feb 8, 2011

Comparing to: Site



5,359 visits came from 67 countries/territories

Site Usage

Visits	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate	
5,359 % of Site Total: 100.00%	2.82 Site Avg: 2.82 (0.00%)	00:02:09 Site Avg: 00:02:09 (0.00%)	70.96% Site Avg: 70.93% (0.05%)	49.23% Site Avg: 49.23% (0.00%)	
Country/Territory	Visits	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
United States	4,795	2.90	00:02:13	70.68%	48.63%
Canada	100	2.41	00:02:01	94.00%	50.00%
United Kingdom	76	2.26	00:01:18	81.58%	52.63%
Venezuela	73	1.75	00:01:40	1.37%	56.16%
France	32	2.66	00:01:41	87.50%	53.12%
Australia	28	2.39	00:02:24	92.86%	39.29%
India	24	2.54	00:01:15	100.00%	58.33%
Japan	23	1.43	00:00:32	73.91%	69.57%
Germany	17	1.53	00:00:09	100.00%	64.71%
Egypt	16	2.81	00:01:20	18.75%	31.25%

1 - 10 of 67

COUNTRIES WHERE VISITORS ARE FROM

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION » GOOGLE ANALYTICS

www.frontporchjournal.com
Content Overview

Nov 7, 2010 - Feb 8, 2011
 Comparing to: Site



Pages on this site were viewed a total of 15,136 times

 15,136 Pageviews

 11,804 Unique Views

 49.23% Bounce Rate

Top Content

Pages	Pageviews	% Pageviews
/index.asp	3,143	20.77%
/submit.asp	1,452	9.59%
/poetry.asp	914	6.04%
/fiction.asp	775	5.12%
/interviews.asp	559	3.69%


 MOST VISITED PAGES

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VITA

Sameera Kapila was born in Bombay, India to Deepak and Surina Kapila. At the age of five, she moved to the island of Curaçao, a Dutch island in the Caribbean, with her parents and sister Dee. In 2003, she moved to Gainesville, Florida, and received her BFA in Graphic Design at the University of Florida. After graduation, she worked at the advertising agency Southern Brand Collective, in Miami, FL, as an Art Director before moving to San Marcos, Texas to begin her masters.

In August 2008, she joined the MFA in Communication Design at Texas State University-San Marcos as a graduate student and graduate teaching assistant. In 2010, Sameera was the Outstanding Graduate Student in the School of Fine Arts and Communication, and received a scholarship from the dean of the school. She has received awards for her design work from competitions such as Good50x70, Posters for Tomorrow, AIGA Blue Ridge, AdFed Miami, the American Advertising Federation, Creative Summit, Art Directors Club of Houston, and *CMYK Magazine* #49 Top 100 New Creatives.

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This thesis was typed and designed by Sameera Kapila.