



Where web meets graphic

Interview Louise lawton

01 | Collaboration is the key for Aim Proximity's Jose Alomajan (left) and Aaron Goldring.

With the future of digital marketing upon us already, where's the dividing line between graphic design and website building? Increasingly blurred within top creative teams, say Aim Proximity head of interactive art Aaron Goldring and digital business director Jose Alomajan.

Q. How do you structure your interactive studio?

We don't actually have an interactive studio per se, we have one creative department that consists of creatives, producers, designers, and developers. Our philosophy is about getting the right people in the room to answer a client brief. This may mean a Flash developer working with a copywriter and an art director which can make for an extremely interesting creative process. If there's one thing we instill in the team, it's that the job isn't done until the project goes live (and beyond in some cases). That is, we are not a production line where it gets passed along the chain and forgotten about.

Q. Do you think one person can design and develop a site well?

In some cases sure, but with the plethora of new innovations and trends, it really does take a team effort to create a positive and memorable experience. However it is important that people have an understanding of the medium outside of their skill sets.

For example a web designer doesn't

need to be able to program a HTML or Flash website themselves, but they should have a good understanding of the technology so they can deliver a high quality experience.

Q. Where do you start the process of a functional website?

The starting point is having a clear understanding of the website's role and defining the desired customer experience. From this point there are two approaches to functionality.

Firstly, for a brand experience site, the creative concept will map out the customer journey from which you can work out the mechanics and functionality to fulfill that journey. For an ecommerce site, you need to go through a process of collecting business requirements, defining a number of customer journeys to assess and prioritise functionality to enable customers to fulfill a range of tasks.

Design and usability play a huge part in getting the balance right, so the pieces of functionality are seamless and intuitive.

Q. Do you see role reversal in the future, with creative being designed first for web, with TV and print being the secondary medium?

Doesn't it already? While nirvana is cracking the idea then looking at how the idea could be executed for the appropriate channels, the reality is you still need a creative lead to provide

direction. And depending on where that creative leads sits, they will generally drive the primary channel. But I think the sands are shifting as to how we define integration. Instead of driving creative by a lead channel, (above the line vs below the line), the conversation is about whether we are trying to push or pull people.

The driving force behind this new conversation is the realisation that the digital world can have a significant impact on brand measures. Often sites live on well after any advertising and become self sufficient. Just look at the explosion of social networks.

Q. Over the next year, what specific roles do you think will be particularly hard to find talent for?

There are some really good grads and juniors coming through in both design and development, all they lack is a bit of experience. So the industry will have some very talented intermediate and senior people in a few years. Right now though, we find it hard to find senior designers and developers. Like many industries, we are suffering from over demand and under supply. Experienced talent is as rare as hen's teeth and when you find them they are worth their weight in gold.

With the clients' appetite for digital growing and agencies viewing digital as more than a 'nice to have', it will be hard to find people across the spectrum – digital creatives, designers and developers. **pt**

Louise Lawton is a consultant at Portfolio Recruitment in Auckland. e. Louise@portfoliorecruit.co.nz www.portfoliorecruit.co.nz