

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [Web Designer VS Web Developer](#)

McLovin' - June 18, 2014, 4:05 pm

I see a lot of threads in the services request & offering section that are filled with the wrong title. I've seen a few titles where the user wrote 'Website Developer needed' and when you open the thread, they describe all the requirements that a web designer can fulfill.

A Website Designer creates the layout and styling of your website i.e. he/she designs it. Web designers accomplish this through HTML, CSS and often times Photoshop (to get a PSD design of the website to later on be converted to HTML & CSS). This guy makes your site look sexy.

A Website Developer works on the back-end of the website i.e. the things you don't see on the website. The developer is the one that utilizes the design of the website to manipulate data and input/output accordingly. Web developers do this through programming languages like PHP, Ruby on Rails, JavaScript and libraries like jQuery and Node.js.

Here's a good read on the subject:

<http://www.theodinproject.com/introduction-to-web-development/what-a-web-developer-does>

Spoiler ([Click to View](#))When requesting or providing a service, make sure to know which one you're doing

Online Expert - June 18, 2014, 4:07 pm

Thanks for this I guess, I didn't know it was a big problem.

McLovin' - June 18, 2014, 4:18 pm

(Jun 18, 2014 04:07 PM)Online Expert Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Thanks for this I guess, I didn't know it was a big problem.

It often is. And not just for the services section, in general people usually forget to make this distinction. They're two very different things.

Pillows - June 18, 2014, 4:20 pm

Thank the lawd. At least someone here has a brain and can tell the difference between the two.

Pineal - June 18, 2014, 4:20 pm

Yeah I get this a lot when dealing with people.

Exemplification - June 18, 2014, 5:24 pm

Working with the average Joe you can't expect to be called the correct thing, as the person requesting it is generally not in the geek world. It is not the customer's job to know what they need or want, that is the job of the person offering the service and said person will not distinguish between the two terms that are actually relatively similar in the minds of consumers even with the points you have made.

TL;DR; its one word with understood context, it isn't a big deal.

Mr.Peanut - June 18, 2014, 5:29 pm

Very interesting, to be honest I didn't know there was a difference.. (meaning my developer worked

on both ends)

But that's why I love this site, there's always something to learn. Also I think it's far more profitable to be a designer (on the business to business/consumer side). As people care about looks mainly (most people).

SavageBoys - June 18, 2014, 5:38 pm

It can get a bit tricky when you throw jQuery into the mix.

Some would consider the effects and various UI bits to fall into the web design category but there is so much more to it that its hard to place.

I personally find that jQuery and javascript in general is important for web designers to learn.

Lukas - June 18, 2014, 6:05 pm

If you want to go into more detail about a web designer (excluding HTML, CSS & so on) it would be better. I code, and also design, but you may want to touch up more about it.

A web designer (graphics) simply makes the layout of the web design, without coding it. There's two types of web designs if you think about it. Ones that code, and ones that do not. Web designers like we find creating graphic threads are the ones classified as designers. Sure you could classify the ones that code as designers also but in my opinion it's more suitable that the ones that design are classified as designers. I know most of you all probably think what I just said sounds really stupid or repeating what Purgified wrote, but it's really not. He stated that web designers style their designs through CSS and HTML, which is completely true, but they also simply create them in Photoshop also.

This is just a little paragraph that I decided to write because I felt like the two types of web designers weren't really be classified differently, which they do need to be if you're going to make a thread like this.

Thanks.

8bits - June 18, 2014, 7:33 pm

Or you can be both, I call it a full stack developer. That's what I call myself, anyways.

But I think a web designer should very well know javascript. I prefer terms "front-end developer" and "back-end developer" instead though.

Sometimes, like in my web design thread, I use the term "Web Designer" because it's more understood that I create websites. Most of my clients don't give two shits what it actually means.

McLovin' - June 19, 2014, 2:38 am

I realise A lot of people provide full stack development. But it can become a problem if you're only offering design services and the customer expects you to code the back-end as well.

For someone like me who makes website designs, I don't want to work on the back-end so I need my clients to understand that distinction.

?-Bandit - June 19, 2014, 5:04 am

(Jun 19, 2014 02:38 AM)Purgified Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I realise A lot of people provide full stack development. But it can become a problem if you're only offering design services and the customer expects you to code the back-end as well.

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Are you needing of a back-end man? I love to work on the back-end, so if you need someone, hit me up with a PM!

Nasyr - June 19, 2014, 5:58 am

I can do the back-end and the design, I prefer more to do the design though because you see it more than the actual back-end of the site.

I love looking at the HTML and, honestly, it just makes me happy to see I have made something f use to someone.

Tasemu - June 19, 2014, 3:51 pm

Color Byt is actually correct. In the industry this is your usual stack:

Web Designer - Created PSD designs that the client signs off on

Front-end Developer - Takes the approved PSD and builds the site that the end user will see. Usually utilising HTML, CSS and Javascript.

Back-end Developer - Creates the server architecture to supply important information and handle most persistent and/or heavy data storage and retrieval. Usually uses PHP, Ruby, Node.js or others.

Might want to edit your OP, its a great thread but its always good to make sure it is as accurate as possible. :)

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Thanks for the feedback. I would argue otherwise, though. Web designers don't always use PSD's to make a website design. A lot of people use HTML & CSS directly as well.

Here's a good blog post on the subject: <http://blog.teamtreehouse.com/psd-to-html-is-dead>

~Dec - June 20, 2014, 7:39 am

I'm afraid it's a little more complicated than just web designers or web developers. There was a time where these were the two different titles, but times have changed. Now, we have this:

Designer - a designer is not always just a web designer. The designer's job is to prototype wireframes for websites, webapps, desktop applications and mobile apps. The designer's job may also include creation of the image assets and marketing campaign assets for various products using multiple tools. It is mostly a vector-based workflow using tools like Illustrator / InDesign / Sketch / Pixelmator, but for slight cleanup or photographic edits Photoshop is used as well. In rare cases, tools like Maya3D or Cinema4D are also used. The designer hands these assets to the UX engineer and the Front-End Developers.

Interaction designer - like a designer, but focuses on "wow" factor. The interaction designer will communicate with the UX engineer and the designer and build prototype "interactions", for example, animations between app page transitions.

UX engineer - or "User Experience Engineer" works in tandem with both the front-end developers and back-end developers to ensure that the experience the user receives while using the product is a hassle and pain-free one. The UX engineer makes the calls for stuff to change when he/she feels that the user experience is simply not good enough. He/she is responsible for ensuring that user actions are reduced to as few steps as possible, that everything is optimized for a fast experience, that buttons are big enough to be tapped on, that the website is good for both search engines and people with disabilities, that no options are hidden from the user, that items always show state, and a hell of a lot more. It's probably one of the toughest jobs, because it requires a much more advanced subset of the same skills a front-end developer has, with the eye for design a designer has, the conceptual understanding of performance benefits and disadvantages of a backend-developer and an extreme attention to detail. (I am a UX engineer IRL - and I can tell you it's a tough job but very worth it if you harness the required skills). The UX engineer will use the same tools a front-end developer uses. It is similar to a full-stack workflow because it involves tweaking both the client and server for optimal performance both in speed and flow.

Front-End developer - the front end developer is responsible for communicating between the designers and back-end developers and building the design into a product that uses the design, integrates the interactions and back-end functions, while following the rules of good user experience. The tools of a front-end developer consist of HTML, CSS and JavaScript, but more often the Front-End developer will harness tools like CSS preprocessors, templating engines, JavaScript transpilers and build systems to make their job a little easier.

Back-End developer - a back end developer will build the business logic of the product, using a server side or compiled language or combination of any of these two. They communicate with the UX and front-end engineers to tweak server performance and explain to the front-end guys what's going on behind the scenes so they get a better understanding of what should be going on on the front end.

Full Stack Developer - these are common and rare at the same time. There are two types of full stack developer - a jack of all trades, master of none - and a highly skilled, knowledgeable and experienced in every field of technology. The first kind usually act as step-ins for the rest of the developers on sick days, while the second kind retain positions of entitlement like Chief Technology Officer, as they know all of the required components for the product and are experienced enough to provide guidance to the rest of the team on the aim of the product and the technologies that should be used to reach that goal.

There are a plethora of other involved titles, like marketing executives, project managers, product managers, and so on, but those are out of the scope of this explanation as they do not actually build the product, they instead give the orders for the requirement of the product or give it some exposure.

Tasemu - June 20, 2014, 8:17 am

Dec has pretty much got it spot on when you go into detail on the matter. ^^

Makaveli. - June 20, 2014, 8:19 am

Thanks for clearing this up OP! I always got confused about this.

JumpWar - June 20, 2014, 10:36 am

Dec put it nicely though I allways prefer "Usability Engineer" over "USer Experience Engineer" as

that is the longer standing term. (UX sounds cooler)