Design comps

Activity Overview

A design comp is an electronic drawing that shows a detailed design of project, like a web page. In this activity students will learn how design comps are used in the design and development process, especially when working with clients, and how to create them so they can present multiple design ideas.

Note: Portions of this activity align to the Adobe Certified Associate objectives. Within the instruction steps and technical guides, the specific learning objectives for the exam(s) are referenced with the following format: [1.1]

Activity Objectives

Project management skills

- Identifying audience(s)

Design skills

- Creating design comps
- Designing for audience(s)
- Creating an original work
- Providing multiple design ideas
- Applying design principles

Technical skills

Photoshop

- Creating design comps

Background preparation resources

Technical and content information

ISTE NETS*S Standards for Students

Adobe Certified Associate objectives

Project Assets

Photoshop guide: How to create design and layer comps [3.2]

Electronic file: design-comps.zip

1. Introduce the concept of a design comp, an electronic drawing that shows a detailed design of project, like a web page. Discuss how design comps are used in the design and development process, especially when working with clients.[1.3, 1.3, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6] Show a sample design comp to discuss and emphasize the following:

   - Mood: A comp is the first impression of what a project will really look like. The comp should immediately convey an appropriate message, such as fun, serious, youthful, organized, trendy, or family-oriented.

   - Color: Colors should be well coordinated, fit the mood and tone of the project, and provide enough contrast for legibility. Show Adobe Kuler (http://kuler.adobe.com) to students and explain how they can use this web service to create and save custom color palettes for any design project. If creating a web-based project, discuss web-safe colors and decide whether it's appropriate for students to design only with web-safe colors.

   - Fonts: Vary fonts sparingly to be effective; consider how size and weight draw attention. Discuss that most projects are designed with one or two fonts, using size, color, and boldface for further distinction. Make sure the contrast between the font and background colors is adequate to make the text legible. If creating a web-based project, discuss which fonts are common on Windows and Macintosh operating systems.

   - Images: Images reflect content and mood. Photographs should be of highest quality. Text used with an image should be close enough to be visually associated with the image. An organization logo should be properly positioned, sized, and so on.

   - Text: The biggest challenge is to use only as much text as is necessary to convey key messages. Organize the text so visitors can scan it to find relevant information, especially web visitors who are more likely to skim than to read carefully.

   - Navigation elements: Buttons, menus, and navigation bars should all reflect the project's mood and integrate effectively with the overall colors, fonts, and images for the project.

2. Ask each team to make two or more design comps of their project using Photoshop. Refer to the *How to create design and layer comps* Photoshop guide [3.2] for technical instruction on how to create design comps. Encourage teams to create comps that show varying perspectives of the project. If working on a web project, remind them to consider the value of consistency between the home page and the content pages.[2.3] Teams can also utilize the sample design comps in the *design-comps.zip* electronic file. If teams have more than one wireframe for multiple viewing devices, have them create a design comp for each wireframe.

Assessment:

	0 – Does not meet expectations	3 – Meets expectations	5 – Exceeds expectations
Design comp	Absent or incomplete.	Student's design comps accurately reflect audience, goals, color choices, mood, images, and text. If creating a web-project, design comp accurately reflects navigation choices. The selected comps reflect a variety of approaches to the design.	Student's design comps accurately reflect audience, goals, color choices, mood, images, and text. If creating a web-project, design comp accurately reflects navigation choices. The selected comps reflect a variety of approaches to the design. Students can clearly articulate the ways design principles are implemented to impact the audience.

Background preparation resources:

• For more teaching and learning resources on the topics in this project, search for resources from the community on the Adobe Education Exchange: http://edex.adobe.com/.

• For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of *Adobe Photoshop*, see *Photoshop* Help.

ISTE NETS*S Standards for Students

This project is aligned to the ISTE NETS*S Technology Standards. Depending on the subject and content area the student selects you may research your own state content standards to see how this project aligns to your state requirements.

ISTE NETS*S: Curriculum and Content Area Standards – NETS for Students

1. Creativity and Innovation

    Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students:

    a. apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes.

    b. create original works as a means of personal or group expression.

6. Technology Operations and Concepts

    Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems, and operations. Students:

    a. understand and use technology systems.

    b. select and use applications effectively and productively.

    d. transfer current knowledge to learning of new technologies.

Adobe Certified Associate, Web Authoring objectives

1.6 Understand project management tasks and responsibilities.

Adobe Certified Associate, Visual Communication objectives

1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of project management tasks and responsibilities.

3.2 Demonstrate knowledge of layers and masks.

Adobe Certified Associate, Interactive Media objectives

1.5 Understand project management tasks and responsibilities.

Adobe Certified Associate, Graphic Design & Illustration objectives

1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of project management tasks and responsibilities.

Adobe Certified Associate, Print & Digital Media Publication objectives

1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of project management tasks and responsibilities.

For more information

Find more teaching materials for using Adobe software in your classroom on the Adobe Education Exchange: http://edex.adobe.com/.