INTRODUCTION

Media and design is a huge part of both my academic and personal life, my interest in these affairs stems from the Industrial Design degree I did in Colombia which had me engrossed from day one; I have done additional courses related to Information Design and Designing for the Internet in London. The skills I have gained from these courses plus the experience obtained for being involved professionally as a designer in the Internet industry will prove to be a valuable stepping stone into the digital media field where I would like to venture as a creative being the main reason of my current studies in media at the Masters level. I believe that working on my own digital portfolio will enhance my understanding of the subject as well as expand my current knowledge, gain new skills that will enable me to both advance and flourish within this area and provide me with the opportunity to show my skills and best work samples to a world-wide audience, future clients and new projects while taking great pleasure in doing so.

Creating a good portfolio which entices clients is no small task; therefore throughout the report I will describe the strategy applied in terms of creativity, planning, design, development, testing and production to implement my own online portfolio www.toyamunera.com. And do from this not just another web site; it has to be a communication channel for business opportunities.

The design of toyamunera.com is simple and minimalist, because of the unique nature of the projects I work on I took the approach “less is more” so those projects themselves become main characters in this web site.

“Simplicity is the ultimate form of sophistication” Leonardo Da Vinci
Minimal design is visually a clean layout that has so many benefits; faster loading times, require fewer server resources and are usually faster to develop than those graphically complex. Plus, they give professional, elegant and clean impression to visitors; those are all features that I blend in my work to offer stylish and intuitive solutions. With limited number of graphic elements I give more attention to details and focus on negative space, typography, spacing and proportions.

The site has to be welcoming, efficient and available to its visitors, while always retaining a strong sense of design usually associated with fresh and unconventional way to present the content www.toyamunera.com is a site easily maintainable and updateable, with 12 pages done by no superfluous code, each element is tagged with description to show exactly what it does.

Toyamunera.com was designed to provoke interest. The intent of the project is to start a dialogue about design and how could it be beneficial for a possible client, for this reason when first arriving to the site, the visitor finds a dynamic menu with seven columns that are actually links to main sections in the site and feature the projects I have worked on (Web Design, Product, Branding, Applications, Identity, graphic Applications and Animation); which also has detailed information in the profile, experience, education and contact pages. What have I done in the past? Which software do I master? How I answer to these questions will add a CV element to my website and can definitely help me to get that job I want.

How to put my own print on it and make it memorable for the visitors that is the main goal for this portfolio which can be achieved by using unusual colours, fonts and a different type of navigation from what is found “everywhere”.

The audience need to be constantly stimulated, occasionally surprised and of course serviced at the highest possible standards (Nielsen, 2006). Therefore usability is as important as is visually clean structure.

toyamunera.com, portfolio website is considered a project gallery from the point of view of the audience high-scholars in their junior and senior
years and their companies, media agencies, human resources departments or directive teams in any company aware of the importance of the Internet prospective. Using a timeline approach, the images provoked discussion and helped myself to associate those projects with past events. I need to show what the audience wants me to do for them as my future clients.

Creativity and curiosity are important to this audience, they like things that make them feel efficient and that are related to their own projects/business. Slightly more rational than fun oriented, they tend to be more interested in new technology because it is part their everyday tasks and helps manage their jobs. Reachability and reliability is important and they like tools that help them feel less stressed and more in control of their busy lives. They spend more time away from home, due to private and professional reasons and are relatively active in their community acting as opinion leaders. They like to keep up to date with what is happening in the world.

These people have a particular need to be recognized as socially and financially successful, social status seekers. (comScore, Inc. - Measuring the Digital World, 2012)

**MAIN ANALYSIS**

With the audience clearly identified, the project design will provide the interface that engages and creates emotional connections that transcend the platform and keeps the user watching and interacting with it. Creativity, usability and attention to detail are key elements to consider for being successful at this web design media project.

**Visual design and usability**

Every website project should be easy to absorb as well as efficient in delivery, it needs to be transparent in the message, users do not want to think, they just want to understand. (Krug, 2006) (Sterne, 1997)
For this website usability is taken to include the guidelines and Success criteria. It is highly related with User-centred design as this topic explores the connections and joints between human perception, thinking and learning. Create functionalities for retention, the use of contrasts, color to attract and help the user to interact with the service and information making from it and easy and understandable action.

Gestalt psychology helped to establish visual elements and their functionality into complete compositions; the result would be right hierarchy thanks to proximity, pragnanz, closure principles. Prioritizing Web usability (Nielsen, 2006) (Wiley, 2010) Web usability: a user-centered design approach (Lazar, 2006)

- Design:
  - 800 x 600 page sizing in order to avoid horizontal scrolling, the most critical page elements are visible above the fold.
  - Liquid layout so the pages’ size adjust to different screen solutions
  - Graphic elements, logos and other graphics are used judiciously in order to keep people’s attention in those with high pregnanz. My name as a main logo and contact links such as Facebook, twitter, dribble and LinkedIn are managed as real content.
  - The homepage grid is different to the gallery and CV pages featuring consistent header, content and footer throughout the site, there is also an area in the upper row that relates to a higher level of navigation (contact – community links), it has just one column content where are located the main menu flash animations. The grids on subsequent pages are different in content where text is displayed in 5 columns; header, footer and higher navigation remain the same.

- Fonts: Limit font styles and other text formatting,
  - Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk (logo and designed links) used in different sizes and colors are part of graphic elements. These
elements are inserted as images so they will look exactly the same in every browser and screen.
- Font: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif
  - font-size: 11px
  - color: #666666

As the main text content it is dynamic, the choice of typeface could be displayed in all visitors’ screens.

- Colours and contrast
  - White background with grey and magenta lettering. The 7 colour-palette determine which colour scheme is used throughout the website.

Information Architecture

Some of the findings in this topic describe how the project should determine the route the user follows, the navigation system, legibility to provide clarity and visibility of graphic and content elements and the direction at decision-making stages. Information architecture: blueprints for the Web (Wodtke, 2009) Information Anxiety (Wurman, 2000)

The content has being organized according to the following site map: The proposed site map is drawn according to the different skills I have got after working for specific projects in the past (every page has links that connect to all of them).
Window titles with clear information about the content of each page such as Maria Victoria Munera for Homepage, Profile for Profile page and so on. Short description and key words are included in order to be efficient with SEO and browser strategies.

**Navigation**

Because of the primary purpose of a homepage is to facilitate navigation elsewhere on the site, its crucial that users be able to find appropriate navigation area effortlessly, differentiate between choices and have good sense of what is a link. To achieve this the design is drawing the visitor’s attention to the most important elements (primary navigation) on the
page which are different links to galleries (7 main columns, interactive and colorful flash animations) with projects done in the past and show the skills they are looking for.

According to the sitemap, group similar links such as Profile, Experience, Education and Contact to make the look similar and easy to identify. That makes the navigation transparent and obvious, also page layout and menu positioning is constant throughout to prevent the user becoming lost. Clear indication is given by sections allowing the user to allocate the information with the minimum number of clicks.

**Animations**

Pictures and animations are in JPEG, PNG and Flash formats. Although Flash is used few times the site is not reliant on it, JavaScript checks the presence of the right plug-in and if it is absent it will check other to play the movie.

Past and present by photos (time-line): I selected and used photographic images throughout the site using imagery that organize digital skills by chronological-photo gallery

**Technologies employed and Resources**

Clever programming ensures that the upload speed is maximised and the streaming of Flash files allows the beginning of the 7 animations in the homepage. The stylesheet (CSS) gives consistent look across computer platforms and browsers; they also simplified the HTML code reducing the chance of errors when updating the site. The software used was Photoshop, Flash, Illustrator and Dreamweaver. A clear explanation of aesthetic decision framed by logic, supported by visual standards, and developed with creativity assures the project engagement. Better still; the appropriate application of these principles connects the audience with the “less is more” premise.
CONCLUSION

The Internet world is a complex environment where thousands of websites try to engage audience.

There is strength in the simplicity of the design and a flexibility that allows for the page to be a solid project.

In order to accomplish this project, from the web site design research I explore creative, conceptual, technical and production issues to finally elaborate the message with minimalist layout, image elements and typography to show different skills through the web site; usability test, process and feasibility tests have to be implemented in the next stage of the project. However, versions control, test environment and user acceptance was done before its release.

It has been through this personal web design/development project that has been highlighted the importance of user-friendly interfaces to enable a good relationship designer-visitor, how is the user interacting with every element displayed, shows that visual communication and intuitive navigation are a real challenge for every web project, suitable to be improved every day.

The issues raised in this report will certainly be taken forward in future web design projects that may arise in my career.


